Young girl rushed to CHC after being hit by car. PAGE 2
Lawyers propose creating CNMI grand jury process. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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US House committee rejects Kilili amendment for college affordability

YOUTUBE

In this screengrab from a YouTube video, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) gestures as he talks about his proposed amendment to H.R. 6951, or the College Cost Reduction Act, during the markup on the legislation before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce last Wednesday. Sablan's amendment was defeated.

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Republican majority in a U.S. House of Representatives committee has rejected Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's (D-MP) proposal to create a grant program to cover the difference between in-state and out-of-state tuition for CNMI and American Samoa students who attend a public institution of higher education in a different state or territory.

Republican lawmakers in the Committee on Education and the Workforce voted Wednesday to reject Sablan's proposed amendment to H.R. 6951, or the College Cost Reduction

See HOUSE on Page 4

Bill seeks to ease issuance of ID cards to Rota residents

Manglona

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) has introduced a local bill that will authorize and facilitate the issuance of Rota identification cards to

See BILL on Page 4

Man threatens relatives for declining to give him a ride

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A man was arrested for allegedly threatening his family and violating a court order in a fit of rage because they refused to give him a ride and drop him off someplace.

Joshua Orilly Garde was

See MAN on Page 4

KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
Joshua O. Garde is escorted by Department of Corrections officers following his bail hearing before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho last Monday.

Salas

CNMI bids farewell to one of the islands' oldest artists

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

The CNMI lost a cultural icon and long-time accomplished artist when Flowerpot Tuiolosega Salas breathed her last at the age of 73 on Jan. 30, 2024.

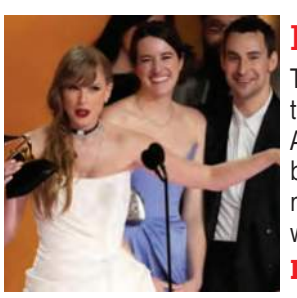
While keeping true to her Samoan culture, with a traditional Fa'a Samoa burial, it was one of the artist's last

See FAREWELL on Page 4

INSIDE

BUSINESS
Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan proudly announces its recognition as Micronesia's leading resort in 2023 by the esteemed World Travel Awards.
PAGE 11

NATION
The Supreme Court on Thursday will be taking its first look at the insurrection clause in a case in which the stakes couldn't be higher.
PAGE 12



LIFE & STYLE
Taylor Swift won album of the year at the Grammy Awards for "Midnights," breaking the record for most wins in the category with four.
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Local

Minor rushed to CHC following auto-pedestrian crash

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A young girl was rushed to the Commonwealth Health Center last Friday after being hit by a car along the Chalan Pale Arnold highway in Garapan.

The Department of Public Safety reported that a female minor was rushed to CHC last Friday evening following an auto-pedestrian crash by the traffic signal light at the intersection of Kopra Di Oru Street and Husga Avenue along Chalan Pale Arnold.

The minor was reportedly conscious after the incident and while being transported to CHC for further evaluation and treatment to her injuries. It remains unclear if the minor survived or the extent of the injuries she sustained.

According to DPS, speed and alcohol were not factors in the accident. Instead, police are citing driver and "pedestrian error" as the cause of the crash.

According to a DPS press release, DPS dispatch received a call of an auto-pedestrian crash at around 7:14pm on Feb. 2.

Police officers arrived at the scene at approximately 7:19pm and came upon medics of the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services already providing medical aid to the girl.

Officers noted a silver Nissan pickup truck with minor damage to the hood's front bumper and right side. It was later determined that the truck was the vehicle that hit the pedestrian.

DPS said the 33-year-old male driver was traveling north and the traffic signal light had been green. As the driver neared the intersection, that's when he noticed the pedestrian crossing the crosswalk.

MVA INSTALLS SAFETY SIGNS AT TWO BEACHES MVA

Multi-language safety signs are installed by the Marianas Visitors Authority and Department of Public Works in January 2024 at the Unai Nanasu and Unai Fandang beaches along the newly-opened Windward Drive on Saipan. The signs also remind beachgoers to take their trash with them upon departure.

Senate committee wraps up Rota confirmation hearings for Tenorio

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate Executive Appointments and Government Investigations Committee wrapped up on Rota yesterday its confirmation hearings on the nomination of deputy attorney general Lillian Ada Tenorio to serve as an associate judge of the Superior Court.

Similar to the recent hearings on Tinian and Saipan, Tenorio also received overwhelming support for her nomination from Rota officials and residents.

At the conclusion of the hearing, Sen. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) who is vice chair of the EAGI Committee, said considering all the comments provided by the public on Rota, Tinian, and Saipan, he has full faith in Tenorio's ability to serve the judicial system.

"And I just wanted to express on the record my full support for your confirmation," Manglona told Tenorio.

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the EAGI Committee, also expressed confidence in Tenorio's abilities and her experiences to assist the NMI Judiciary, speaking on behalf of the committee.

"It would be our privilege to recommend to advance your nomination for confirmation," Babauta said.

Among the many people on Rota who spoke in support of Tenorio's nomination were Rota Mayor Aubry M. Hocog and Sen. Dennis James C. Mendiola (R-Rota). Hocog's chief of staff, Dean Reynold Manglona, read Hocog's statements as the mayor was not available.

HONDA
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Lawyers propose creating CNMI grand jury process

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Lawyer Robert T. Torres suggests that establishing a grand jury process protects the due process of citizens in investigations.

A House of Representatives bill that aims to give investigative subpoena powers to the Office of the Attorney General is inappropriate and cedes too much power to the AG without a compelling government interest where there are lesser restrictive means, according to veteran lawyer Robert T. Torres last Monday, whose position is concurred by 15 other CNMI lawyers.

Instead, Torres suggests creating a law that will establish the "grand jury" process in the CNMI. He said establishing the grand jury process protects the due process of citizens in such investigations.

In a letter to Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerre-

» Torres, 15 other lawyers insist bill that aims to give AG Investigative Division subpoena powers is inappropriate

ro (D-Saipan) and Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), Torres said Article 1 of the Constitution recognizes that personal rights are paramount and the existing statutory and investigative powers of the Department of Public Safety and the Office of the Public Defender are enough for investigations.

Torres and 15 other lawyers provided the Senate Judiciary, Government and Law Committee chaired by Babauta with supplemental comments regarding House Bill 23-22 that remains pending before the committee.

H.B. 23-22, authored by House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee chair Rep. Marissa Renee Flores (Ind-Saipan), will create an investigative division within the OAG, codify investigative subpoena power, and improve the investigation of cases involving public corruption.

The House passed the legislation, H. B. 23-22, House Substitute 1, on May 10, 2023 and was subsequently transmitted the following day, May 11, to the Senate. The bill is now with the Senate JGL Committee.

In his letter to DeLeon Guerrero and Babauta, Torres said that, rather than having an unchecked OAG given blanket subpoena power to compel production of documents and testimony without protections, the establishment of the CNMI grand jury would ensure that indictments charged by a grand jury are supported by probable cause.

With a grand jury established, he said the AG can investigate and present cases to that body as he pursues investigations of criminal cases.

At the same time, Torres said, the grand jury can review the case presented and return an indictment if appropriate based on probable cause.

He said a grand jury made up of CNMI citizens can decline to return an indictment if the evidence is lacking as to probable cause.

Another important reason, he said, to have the grand jury law established is that if the grand jury returns an indictment, an arrested person would not have a right to a preliminary hearing since probable cause has been found by the grand jury.

Similarly, he said, if there is no grand jury indictment, the arrested person would have the right to a preliminary hearing with 10 days of arrest.

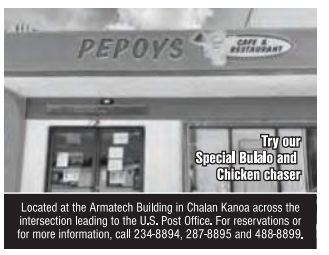
Torres said the materials that he submitted to the Senate JGL Committee were provided with the assistance of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, including its Legislative Advocacy Network.

Torres has been a member of NACDL since 2000. The association advocates for justice in criminal cases and ensuring due process for criminal defendants.

He said they have asked for and received a response from NACDL to assist the CNMI Legislature in reviewing criminal justice legislation to provide authorities and resources to ensure a balanced view of proposed legislation beyond those comments from the OAG.

Torres reiterated their position to H. B. 23-22 and asserted that, as proposed, the bill should be rejected and shelved.

"There are more appropriate statutory approaches in criminal justice reform that protects our citizens while allowing for law enforcement investigations," he said.



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Job Vacancy Announcement (REVISED)

JVA No. 23-070
Opening Date: April 21, 2023
Closing Date: UNTIL FILLED

POSITION TITLE:	Chief Financial Officer
DEPARTMENT:	Executive Directors Office
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	Commensurate with Education and Experience
CONTRACT:	Two Year Contract, subject to renewal
POSITION(S):	One (1)

Reporting directly to CUC's Executive Director ("ED") or designee, the Chief Financial Officer ("CFO") works directly with the Deputy Executive Director ("DED"). The CFO fills a position required by the Stipulated Order ("SO") of the United States of America vs. the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, Civil Case No. CV 08-0051. The Corporation is seeking a dynamic, experienced professional with strong collaborative leadership skills and demonstrated expertise in all areas of municipal and utility finance.

Duties:

- Responsible for the overall accounting, budgeting, and financial operations of CUC.
- Supervises financial professionals and support staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staffs are trained; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations.
- Maintains the financial and budget records and accounts for monthly and annual reporting of CUC.
- Performs financial, budget and rate analyses of operations and revenues; makes recommendations for adjustments to rates.
- Develops, implements and enforces financial and budget policies and procedures.
- Directing preparation, analysis, implementation, and monitoring of the utilities' financial reporting and budget process.
- Prepares complex financial and budget reports and special reports as requested by the Board and ED supervising and interpreting study results, including cost of service studies.
- Schedules and coordinates annual audits with independent contractors.
- Prepares monthly and an annual financial report of the financial condition of CUC.
- Plans, implements and monitors short and long-term goals for the department and CUC.
- Debt management, issuance and administration.
- Prepares audit responses and ensure that appropriate corrective actions are executed;
- Review accuracy of billing adjustments to individual accounts from billing staff and receivable accounts.
- Conduct annual performance evaluation of accounting staff.
- Other duties of a similar nature or level as assigned or required.

Minimum Requirements: Bachelor's degree in accounting, economics, financial management, public or business administration from a United States accredited institution or one with equivalent accreditation. Ten (10) years of professional experience in governmental or financial accounting, including experience in a supervisory and/or management position.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Thorough knowledge of Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, as well as Financial Accounting Standards Board and Government Accounting Standards Board pronouncements and interpretations, auditing principles, and utility rate structures and rate setting principles and methods; Working knowledge of automated financial systems and programs to manage all aspects of reporting, personnel management and training; General knowledge of utility operations, debt collection practices, and limitations. Supervisory principles; Managerial and leadership principles; Generally Accepted Accounting Principles or other applicable laws, rules and regulations; Budgetary principles; Financial principles; Mathematical principles.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Managing, monitoring, and evaluating subordinates; Providing organizational leadership and administration; Developing and executing strategic plans, programs, and policies; Planning and oversight of organizational programs and functions; Providing strategic and visionary thinking; Providing short and long-range planning, development and implementation; Forecasting, developing and administering organization budget; Critical thinking and independent decision making; Providing legal, policy and contractual compliance oversight; Serving as organization representative to management, the Board and external stakeholders; Preparing and delivering public presentations; Providing fiscally sound decision making; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing: • Valid CNMI Driver's License or one from a U.S. jurisdiction with appropriate class.
• A Certified Public Accountant or Certified Management Accountant is highly desired.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

Relocation Expenses: If hired from outside the CNMI, relocation expenses are negotiable; but they are not to exceed $10,000.00 for moving to Saipan and not to exceed $10,000.00 for moving away from Saipan. Receipts will be required for justification. Other conditions may be applicable.

How to Apply: To apply, please submit a resume, cover letter, a list of references, and a CUC Employment Application by one of the following means:

1. United States Postal Service, First Class Mail or Priority Mail*:
   Human Resource Office
   Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
   P. O. Box 501220 Saipan, MP 96950-1220 USA

***If you choose to submit via USPS, please still also fax "or" email "or" drop off your package.**

2. Fax: 670-235-5131
3. Drop Off:

You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday, 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (except legal holidays). Applications on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Job Vacancy Announcement (REVISED)

JVA No. 23-101
Opening Date: Wednesday, August 02, 2023
Closing Date: UNTIL FILLED

POSITION TITLE:	Executive Director
DEPARTMENT:	Executive Directors Office
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	Commensurate with Education and Experience
CONTRACT:	Two Year Contract, subject to renewal
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Board of Directors or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Supervises staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations.
- Assumes full management responsibility for all of CUC's divisions and services.
- Directs and oversees the strategic planning, development and implementation of programs and services; directs operations within financial constraints and in accordance with CUC policies, regulations, and under the direction of the Board.
- Monitors and evaluates efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery methods and processes; assesses and monitors service delivery levels; identifies opportunities, weaknesses and strengths of divisions; directs the implementation of changes.
- Plans, directs and coordinates work of divisions through the upper management team by meeting with management to identify, prioritize and resolve problems. Manages the development and implementation of goals, objectives, missions, policies, priorities and allocations of resources.
- Participates on a variety of board and committees and attends a wide variety of management meetings. Performs short and long-range strategic planning. Prepares and submits annual budget recommendations and financial analysis for Board approval; implements, communicates and administers approved budget; ensures fiscal compliance. Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements: Master's degree in management, engineering, finance, or public administration, "OR", in the alternative, a bachelor's degree in engineering and registration as a Professional Engineer pursuant to the National Council of Engineering Examiners standards in either the civil, mechanical, or electrical branch; Senior management experience of at least ten (10) years in a similar wastewater, drinking water, and/or power utility (preferably combined utility), with similar or greater capital and operating budgets, capital improvement projects, human resource needs, utility financing issues, operation and maintenance training and implementation needs. In addition, the Executive Director (ED) shall demonstrate the following: Proven management and communication skills; Demonstrated ability to lead, motivate, and develop staff; Experience with managing major drinking water and wastewater systems during periods of planning, design, and construction; and Experience with drinking water and wastewater systems; user fee system development; bond funding; staff training and development; and federal drinking water and wastewater requirements.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Advanced managerial principles, practices and techniques; Leadership principles; Utility service administration principles and practices; Financial management and forecasting principles; Strategy development principles and procedures; Contract management principles; Risk management principles; Customer service principles; Project management principles; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Managing, monitoring, and evaluating subordinates; Providing organizational leadership and administration; Developing and executing strategic plans, programs, and policies; Planning and oversight of organizational programs and functions; Providing strategic and visionary thinking; Providing short and long-range planning, development and implementation; Forecasting, developing and administering organization budget; Critical thinking and independent decision making; Providing legal, policy and contractual compliance oversight; Serving as organization representative to management, the Board and external stakeholders; Preparing and delivering public presentations; Providing fiscally sound decision making; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing: Valid CNMI Driver's License or one from a U.S. jurisdiction with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

Relocation Expenses: If hired from outside the CNMI, relocation expenses are negotiable; but they are not to exceed $10,000.00 for moving to Saipan and not to exceed $10,000.00 for moving away from Saipan. Receipts will be required for justification. Other conditions may be applicable.

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Palacios: Decision to appoint Macaranas forthcoming

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios says a decision whether or not to permanently appoint Anthony Macaranas as Department of Public Safety's commissioner is forthcoming.

This comes soon after Macaranas, who is the DPS chief in an acting capacity, recently expressed an interest in permanently taking the position, saying he believes the position is a calling and he truly wants to take part in improving the department and rebuilding trust between DPS and the community.

Palacios

Palacios said a decision is forthcoming, but he is glad that Macaranas is showing interest.

"I can't tell you right now if Anthony will be appointed. That decision will be made soon but I'm glad he is showing interest. We will let the community know once we've made those decisions," he said.

Macaranas has taken on the role as DPS chief without pay and had stated he will continue to do so even if he is confirmed as his only intent is to build back the department's reputation and relationship with the community.

Commonwealth law prohibits double-dipping among government employees and its retirees, when a person receives both pension and a government salary.

Macaranas, who spent most of his career life in the police force, has already retired but returned to DPS as its commissioner following the resignation of former commissioner Clement Bermudes.

2 in illegal transport of aliens case allegedly admit to meth use

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Probation office has just informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI that two of the four men who were recently indicted for their alleged involvement in a scheme to transport illegal aliens from Saipan to Guam have admitted to using drugs.

U.S Probation officer Juanette David-Atalig informed the U.S. District Court for the NMI last Monday that Ramon Jose Quitano Sablan and Maverick Ryan Iguel Marlik have both admitted to using crystal methamphetamine, or "ice."

The other two defendants in this case are Yan Juan Hu Taitano and Lee Jesse Omar Reyes.

Last Jan. 23, a grand jury handed down an indictment alleging Sablan, Marlik, Taitano, and Reyes conspired to transport illegal aliens to Guam. An arrest warrant was issued that same day but was only executed on Jan. 30.

On Jan. 31, the defendants made their initial appearance before Chief Judge Ramona Manglona who released the defendants on a $1,000 unsecured bond each, with conditions to include pretrial supervision, random drug testing, and substance use treatment.

On Feb. 5, the defendants reported to the U.S Probation Office for supervision processing where they were instructed to submit to a random drug test. When asked what they believe the test result would be, both Sablan and Marlik stated "positive."

The defendants each submitted an admission of drug use form, with Sablan admitting to methamphetamine use last Feb. 4 while Marlik admitted to using meth last Feb. 2.

The defendants remain out on unsecured bail as no action will be taken for the time being.

According to the indictment, beginning in or about June 2023, Taitano and Reyes orchestrated a plan to transport a group of nine Chinese nationals from the Northern Mariana Islands to Guam, despite knowing that the Chinese nationals had no right or authority to enter Guam.

To carry out the plan, Taitano and Reyes allegedly hired Sablan and Marlik to captain a small motorboat from Saipan to Guam on or about July 9, 2023. According to the indictment, the Chinese nationals agreed to pay Taitano and Reyes up to $5,000 per individual.

The indictment states that Reyes agreed to pay Sablan to drive the boat and to pay Marlik to provide assistance like refueling the boat.

However, enroute, the boat ran out of fuel and began to drift just before it reached the island of Rota. They all had to be rescued by the U.S. Coast Guard.

YES, HE WILL
Surrounded by his wife, Daisy, and children, Rep. Edwin K. Propst (D-Saipan) announced Tuesday night his intent to run under the NMI Democratic Party as the CNMI's delegate to the U.S. Congress in the Nov. 5, 2024, election. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, several lawmakers, government officials, and community members joined the event held at Propst parents' home in Susupe.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

FAREWELL

From page 1

wish to be buried on Saipan.

"... she was not only the oldest local artist here in the CNMI, but [she was also] a Taupou, the last Princess of Samoa. Her body was supposed to go back to the land where our royalties get buried but mom insisted that she stay with the people that she loved here in the CNMI," said Alofi Tuiolosega, Salas' daughter. "Salas was also one of the last remaining artists on island, and she communicated her love for the CNMI and Pacific Islands with her artistry."

And although gone from this life, she's not forgotten and her legacy lives on through the art she made, and through the lives that she impacted, including those of her husband, daughter, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, and many of those whom she called family.

Her family, friends, and loved ones will be gathering this Friday at the Borja Funeral Home in Susupe to commemorate and honor her life. Public viewing will be from 7am to 9am and, after a special presentation at 9pm, the memorial service for Salas will begin at 9:30am.

HOUSE

From page 1

Act, during a markup on the legislation, which was introduced by committee chair Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-North Carolina).

Despite this defeat of his amendment, Sablan said he will continue to work for every opportunity to expand educational access for the CNMI's deserving students.

Sablan said in his *e-kilili* newsletter over the weekend that his proposal was intended to boost education access for college students in the CNMI and American Samoa, majority of whom live below the federal poverty line.

In his remarks during the bill's markup, Sablan said a quality postsecondary education is a transformational tool that must be made available to all students across the nation regardless of where they live.

Sablan said his amendment would help ensure the students of the Marianas and American Samoa are empowered to pursue higher education.

He said the CNMI and American Samoa are the only two U.S. territories that have no four-year college institutions so students must go off-island for many areas of study.

Sablan's proposal was modeled after the District of Columbia's Tuition Assistance Grant Program. He said his amendment will send funds to American public institutions of higher education to cover the difference in the costs of in-state and out-of-state tuition for students.

He said simply put, four-year degrees are too often cost-prohibitive for deserving students in the CNMI and American Samoa even after factoring in federal student aid.

Sablan said in the CNMI, there are families that have gross household income of $30,000, $35,000 to $40,000 a year. He said good colleges' cost at least $10,000 to $15,000 a semester.

BILL

From page 1

the island's residents.

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s request for comments, Manglona said yesterday there are special circumstances that are currently prohibiting individuals from obtaining a Rota resident card.

"By being able to provide all residents of Rota the opportunity to obtain an ID card regardless of immigration status, this serves as a way to collect demographic data that organizations and agencies can use to provide assistance to our people," the senator said.

Manglona stated in his legislation, Senate Local Bill 23-04, that the Rota Legislative Delegation finds that the Commonwealth Code requires proof of lawful resident status to obtain a Rota resident identification card.

He said the RLD, however, finds that certain residents are without ID cards for specific reasons, including lack of proof of lawful status. The senator said the RLD further finds that it is important for a Rota resident to have at least one ID card.

The legislation proposes to amend the Commonwealth Code that refers to Rota resident identification card.

SLB 23-04 states that upon submission of the application and the payment of the fee, the Office of the Mayor shall issue to a person a resident identification card.

The application "shall be accompanied by either a copy of the applicant's birth certificate or certificate of baptismal record, a passport, U.S. Social Security number or card, or any other document determined to be sufficient by the Office of the Mayor to process the identification card."

At a minimum, the card shall have on it a distinguishable number assigned to the card, the full name, sex, date of birth, address, a picture, and either a facsimile signature of the cardholder or a space upon which the cardholder shall write his usual signature in ink immediately upon receipt of the identification card.

No identification card shall be valid unless it has been signed by the cardholder and the presiding mayor, or his/her designee, according to the bill.

MAN

From page 1

arrested last Thursday for violating a Superior Court order of protection when he allegedly harassed and threatened family members.

Garde, 32, is facing charges of domestic violence, contempt of court, and disturbing the peace.

Garde was brought before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho for a bail hearing last Monday. Camacho kept Garde's cash bail at $3,000 before remanding him back to Department of Corrections custody pending further court proceedings.

The judge ordered Garde to return to court for a preliminary hearing on Feb. 14 at 10am while his arraignment was set for March 4 at 9am.

According to court documents, police were called last Feb. 1 at around 6:41pm about a disturbance at an apartment in Gualo Rai.

At the scene, police spoke with two victims who said Garde came into the apartment and started demanding that they and their mother drop him off somewhere.

The mother told Garde that she could not drop him off because she didn't have enough gas for her vehicle, which angered Garde.

They said Garde started shouting at them and continued demanding that someone else drop him off.

When they told him no, Garde allegedly got mad and walked around the living room shouting and he reportedly even took a knife and waved it around while shouting.

The victims told police that they went inside a bedroom and stayed there to avoid a confrontation.

Court documents state that Garde only left the house after hearing one of the victims on the phone.

At 1:25am, a police officer spotted Garde on Enrique Street in Chalan Kanoa. He was arrested for violating a court order, disturbing the peace, and domestic violence.

The violated court order of protection, issued by Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio back in September 2023, had ordered Garde to stay away from his relatives for a year.

IRS reminds disaster victims with extensions to file '22 returns by Feb. 15

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Internal Revenue Service reminded disaster-area taxpayers who received extensions to file their 2022 returns that these returns are due on Feb. 15, 2024.

Eligible taxpayers were those affected by various disasters that occurred between Aug. 8 and Oct. 9, 2023. This included Hurricane Idalia, Hurricane Lee, Tropical Storm Bolaven, the wildfires in Hawaii, the seawater intrusion in Louisiana and storms and flooding in Illinois. For extension filers, payments on these returns were not eligible for the additional time because they were originally due last spring before any of these disasters occurred.

Locations that qualify for the Feb. 15 filing deadline:

- Forty-nine counties in Florida
- Thirty-two counties in Georgia.
- All of Guam
- Maui and Hawaii counties in Hawaii
- Cook County in Illinois
- Five parishes in Louisiana
- All 16 counties in Maine
- All 14 counties in Massachusetts
- Six islands in the Northern Mariana Islands
- All 46 counties in South Carolina.

The IRS normally provides relief, including postponing various tax filing and payment deadlines, for any area designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. As long as their address of record is in a disaster-area locality, individual and business taxpayers automatically get the extra time without having to ask for it. The current list of eligible localities is always available on the disaster relief page on IRS.gov.

» All or parts of 8 states and 2 territories affected

In addition, the IRS will work with any taxpayer who lives outside the disaster area but whose records necessary to meet a deadline occurring during the postponement period are located in the affected area. Taxpayers qualifying for relief who live outside the disaster area need to contact the IRS at 866-562-5227. This also includes workers who assisted with relief activities who are affiliated with a recognized government or philanthropic organization.

Besides those who received extensions to file their 2022 returns, there are other returns, payments and time-sensitive tax-related actions that also qualify for the Feb. 15 deadline. For details, see the IRS disaster relief page, especially the disaster relief announcements for each state and territory.

The tax relief is part of a coordinated federal response to the damage caused by these disasters and is based on local damage assessments by FEMA. For information on disaster recovery, visit disasterassistance.gov. ***(PR)***

Labor investigation recovers $547K in back wages and damages from Ian Construction

BARRIGADA, Guam—The U.S. Department of Labor has recovered $547,378 in back wages and liquidated damages for 139 employees of a federal construction contractor in Guam who shortchanged them in violation of federal labor laws.

Investigators with the department's Wage and Hour Division determined Ian Corporation—operating as Ian Construction—violated multiple federal regulations governing the employment of workers on projects supported by federal funds. The division found the company and owner Jihyung P. Chong violated prevailing wage requirements under the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts and the overtime requirements of the Contract Work Hours and Safety Standards Act and Fair Labor Standards Act by failing to pay for all hours worked.

The division recovered a total of $295,420 in back wages and $251,957 in liquidated damages for 139 employees.

In addition to back wages and damages recovered for workers, the employer's repeated and willful violations led the department to assess $50,000 in penalties.

This is not the first time the department has investigated Ian Construction. The division previously investigated this federal contractor in 2012, 2016, and 2021 for multiple violations, including overtime, health and welfare benefits, driving time, hours not paid and illegal deductions, resulting in a combined recovery of $10,849 for 44 workers.

"Just like there are baseline building standards for the construction of homes and community infrastructure, there are also baseline wage standards for the workers who build them. These must be adhered to at all times," explained Wage and Hour Division district director Terence Trotter in Honolulu. "Counting and paying for all hours worked, including mandated breaks of short duration, isn't just a good idea—it's the law."

Learn more about the DBRA, the CWHSSA, and other laws enforced by the division, as well as a search tool to use if you think you may be owed back wages collected by the division. The department can speak with callers confidentially in more than 200 languages through the agency's toll-free helpline at 866-4US-WAGE (487-9243). Download the agency's new Timesheet App, now available for Android and iOS devices in English and Spanish, to ensure hours and pay are accurate. ***(PR)***

4.8-magnitude earthquake near Merizo

At 8:05pm on Jan. 31, 2024, a report of a 4.8-magnitude earthquake occurred near Merizo Village, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center.

For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at (670) 237-8000. ***(PR)***

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID
ITB24-CHCC/PDMP-009

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: March 11th, 2024 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"LEASE OF VEHICLE"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [WWW.CHCC. HEALTH]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL ANO TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

TOUR GUIDE – VIP-2024-01
Saipan, CNMI

TOUR GUIDE: VIP CORPORATION SAIPAN, CNMI

Describe tour points of interest to group members, and respond to questions. Escort individuals or groups on cruises, sightseeing tours, or through places of interest such as industrial establishments, public buildings, and art galleries. Conduct educational activities for school children. Monitor visitors' activities to ensure compliance with establishment or tour regulations and safety practices. Provide directions and other pertinent information to visitors. Greet and register visitors, and issue any required identification badges or safety devices. Distribute brochures, show audio-visual presentations, and explain establishment processes and operations at tour sites. Research various topics, including site history, environmental conditions, and clients' skills and abilities to plan appropriate expeditions, instruction, and commentary. Select travel routes and sites to be visited based on knowledge of specific areas. Drive motor vehicles to transport visitors to establishments and tour site locations.

Minimum Requirements: High School diploma and 12 months experience required experience in communicating to Chinese Tourists..

Workplace: CHALAN PALE ARNOLD GUALO RAI VILLAGE, Saipan CNMI

To apply: Please send your resume to VIP CORPORATION., PMB A-4 Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950 or e-mail to vip.corp.sp@gmail.com **Job Number – VIP-2024-01**

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

AMENDED
NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY
OF
COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS
FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2024

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY NMHC WITH CPD FUNDS.

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, **through the** Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is announcing the availability of an **estimated** $1,627,136.00 in Community Planning and Development (CPD) funds available from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. NMHC anticipates receiving an estimated amount of $980,125.00 in the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG); $489,268.00 in the Home Investment Partnerships (HOME); $81,210.00 in the Emergency Solutions Grant (ESG) Program, and $76,533 in the Housing Trust Fund Program, for Program Year (PY) 2024. NMHC will announce the actual allocation amounts, when published by HUD.

The CDBG funds, authorized under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, may be used for a wide range of community development activities to revitalize neighborhoods, provide affordable housing, expand economic opportunities, and improve community facilities and services. However, use of these funds must meet at least one of the national objectives which include: 1) to benefit low and moderate-income families; 2) to eliminate slum or blight conditions; or 3) to meet other urgent community development needs.

The CDBG program requires a grant recipient to certify that it will minimize displacement of persons as a result of activities assisted with CDBG funds. The CNMI government does not plan on undertaking any activity which will cause displacement of person. In the event of any unforeseen displacement resulting from any CDBG funded activity, the CNMI government will comply with the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, its implementing regulation and applicable local law.

HOME funds may be used to create affordable housing through financing assistance, site acquisition or improvement, and rehabilitating existing residential dwellings as well as providing funds for new construction or purchase of a single-family residential dwelling. Use of HOME funds must benefit low-income families.

ESG funds may be used to rehabilitate or convert to buildings into homeless shelters and for shelter operating expenses, supportive services and homeless prevention **and rapid re-housing** activities. Use of ESG funds must benefit the homeless.

Applications for the use of CPD funds are available for pick up at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) located in Garapan, Saipan; NMC Campus Bldg. A, San Jose Village, Tinian; and, Sinapalo III Village, Rota, beginning December 13, 2023.

You may also obtain the application online at www.nmhcgov.net in the section titled "Community Planning Development (CDBG)"

Applications must be submitted to the NMHC Offices in Garapan, Saipan (Saipan Residents); NMC Bldg. A, San Jose, Tinian (Tinian Residents); and, Sinapalo III Village, Rota (Rota Residents) by ***March 13, 2024, no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications submitted after March 13, 2024, will not be accepted.***

A briefing will be conducted for interested applicants and for those applicants who have picked up an application for the use of CPD funds. The briefing will address the program requirements and regulations and to solicit input on the NMHC's Consolidated Plan goals and priorities for the next five years, with relation to community planning and development and housing activities.

The schedules for briefing are as follows:

February 14, 2023, 5:30 p.m. for the island of Saipan
February 15, 2023, 5:30 p.m. for the island of Tinian
February 16, 2023 5:30 p.m. for the island of Rota

We are encouraging all non-profit, for profit, and government service providers who are providing services to people with disabilities, homeless individuals, and emergency shelter administrators and operators to attend this briefing.

For residents living on the island of Saipan, the briefing will held at the NMHC Office in Garapan; Residents living on the island of Tinian, the briefing will be held at the NMHC Office at the NMC Campus, Building A; and Residents living on the island of Rota, the briefing will be held at the Rota Mayor's Office Conference Room in Tatachog.

Accommodations for disabled individuals or other non-English speaking individuals who wish to attend the briefing are available upon request by giving at least 24 hours notice prior to the meeting so that such needs can be arranged and provided. Additional inquiries, concerning the CPD program, such as eligibility criteria and program requirements, may be directed to Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Deputy Corporate Director or Ms. Tricia Tenorio, Planner at 234-6866 or 233-0076

/s/
Jesse S. Palacios
Corporate Director

UOG launches its 1st international marine biological survey

UOG

Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, speaking on Thursday, Feb. 1, at the University of Guam, welcomes scientists participating in the University of Guam's Bioblitz and says she looks forward to the research's outcome to help Guam prepare for the future.

The University of Guam launched its first Bioblitz, an international collaboration to catalog the diversity of marine organisms found along the coasts of Guam from Feb. 2 to 22, 2024.

In a ceremony held Thursday, Feb. 1, at the UOG cliffside, eight visiting marine scientists were welcomed by UOG staff, faculty and some of the island's elected officials.

"I look forward to what your research says and your recommendations and outcomes so that we can continue our own food sustainability and preservation for our future," said Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero.

A Bioblitz, also known as a biological inventory, is an event that focuses on finding and identifying as many species as possible in a specific area within a short time. Due to climate change, many species around the world are at risk of extinction and Bioblitzes provide an opportunity to inform future conservation efforts of at-risk species.

"We have the most diverse coral reefs in the U.S. We have more species of corals and more species of fishes, and we have a lot of stuff that we don't even know we've got yet. That's up to the people who have come to participate in this Bioblitz to find out what those things are," said Guam NSF EPSCoR principal investigator Dr. Terry Donaldson.

UOG

The University of Guam launches its Bioblitz, an international collaboration to catalog the diversity of marine organisms along the coasts of Guam from Feb. 2 to 22, 2024. Marine scientists Diana Noto, David Burdick, Dr. Gustav Paulay, and Dr. Robert Lasley are joined by vice speaker Tina Muna Barnes, Sen. Amanda Shelton, Sen. Roy Quinata, Dr. Terry Donaldson, Kyle Mandapat, associate director for Communications and Community Engagement with the UOG Center for Island Sustainability and Sea Grant; Kelsie Ebeling-Whited, and John Paul Labadan.

The Bioblitz is supported by the university's National Science Foundation EPSCoR grant, which aims to employ cutting-edge methods to determine solutions that address the challenges imposed by climate change on coral reefs and associated ecosystems.

The visiting scientists include:

- Dr. Gustav Paulay, Florida Museum
- Dr. Justin Scioli, Smithsonian Marine Station in Florida
- Dr. Kristine White, Georgia College & State University
- Dr. Barbara Mikac, University of Bologna
- Dr. Svetlana Maslakova, University of Oregon
- Dr. Ryutaro Goto, Kyoto Museum
- Shawn Wiedrick, Los Angeles County Museum
- John Slapcinsky, Florida Museum

Along with researchers from the UOG Marine Laboratory, the scientists will collect specimens such as crustaceans, worms, and mollusks through dives, intertidal walks, and by snorkeling. For this event, local community members, scientists, and fishers were consulted to develop a list of locations to collect specimens.

"I would like to acknowledge and thank everyone who is interested in protecting and restoring Guam's incredible marine ecosystems and those who just appreciate it and value it," said UOG Biorepository Crustacea curator Dr. Robert Lasley. "All forms of knowledge are important and play a role in our endeavor to protect and restore this biodiversity."

Once the specimens collected during the Bioblitz have been processed, they will be placed in the Guam NSF EPSCoR Guam Ecosystems Collaboratorium for Corals and Oceans Biorepository, a natural history collection of marine fauna and flora that serves as an archive of the biodiversity found within the Micronesian region.

"This island has been inhabited for thousands of years and it was made habitable by the ocean around us," said Dr. Paulay, curator of invertebrates at the Florida Museum and a former director of the UOG Marine Laboratory. "The CHamoru people relied on the marine resources to keep going in a place like this. For an island community, there's nothing more important than the ocean, so understanding the ocean is absolutely fundamental to island culture and to maintain life on the island." ***(UOG)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS COALITION
AGAINST DOMESTIC & SEXUAL VIOLENCE
P.O. BOX 506689, SAIPAN, MP 96950
PHONE: 670.234.3878

The Northern Marianas Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence's mission is to promote, nourish, and sustain a collective movement against violence. All applicants must be familiar with and agree with NMCADSV's mission to eliminate domestic and sexual violence.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Title: Program Assistant
Salary Range: $10.00/hr to $14.00/hr

Job Summary
The Program Assistant will work with the Executive Director of NMCADSV and its Board to achieve its mission, goals, and objectives. The Program Assistant will support the daily operations of NMCADSV, including support for NMCADSV staff, the Executive Director and/or NMCADSV Board/Members, as assigned.

Duties
- Confers with and reports to the Executive Director
- Assists with the coordination of all NMCADSV activities; including event planning, logistics for NMCADSV and Board meetings, prepartion of materials, and travel logistics
- Provides administrative and clerical support to the Executive Director and the NMCADSV Board of Directors and Members; including receiving calls, receiving and logging mail, and maintaining records, as assigned
- Maintains and manages the NMCADSV membership database
- Assists with finance and operations of the NMCADSV; including daily bookkeeping, vendor relations and record keeping
- Attends all meetings and conference calls, as requested
- Travels to national and inter-island meetings and conferences, as required by the Executive Director
- Oversees the maintenance of office equipment and manages office inventory
- Assists the Executive Director in grants management, including the preparation of application packets and gathering data for reports
- Performs other duties, as assigned

Minimum Qualifications
- High School Diploma, or equivalent
- An agreement with NMCADSV's mission statement and philosophy regarding the elimination of domestic and sexual violence
- Experience in providing clerical and administrative support, including record keeping
- Demonstrated abilities in verbal and written communication
- Proficiency in MS Word and Excel
- Willingness to learn in all areas of NMCADSV operations
- Flexible Schedule
- Must be able to travel

Highly Desired Qualifications
- 1 year of documented experience/work with non-profit organizations or volunteerism
- Own transportation, with documented insurance, registration, and a valid driver's license

To Apply:
A **Resume and Cover Letter** should be submitted on or before 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, February 9, 2024**. Provide a list (not copies) of any certifications and/or awards. Late and incomplete submissions will not be considered.

Submit **resume and cover letter** to alleny@endviolencenmi.org, deliver to NMCADSV's office **(between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.)** at the Marina Heights I Building (2nd Floor, Suite 206) or mail to NMCADSV, P.O. Box 506689, Saipan, MP 96950. (Mailed applications must be postmarked on or before the deadline.) Applicants who are invited for an interview will be asked to bring a copy of their Diploma or equivalent, Police Clearance (within the last 30 days), valid Passport, and a list of references. NMCADSV is an equal opportunity employer. Individuals from under-served communities are encouraged to apply.

This project is 100% supported by federal grants, awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice and Grant # G-2301MPSD-VC awarded by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this release are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131

Job Vacancy Announcement (REVISED)

JVA No. 23-002
Opening Date: October 3, 2022
Closing Date: Until Filled

POSITION TITLE:	**Chief Engineer, P.E.**
DEPARTMENT:	**Water & Wastewater Engineering Division**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**Commensurate with Education and Experience**
CONTRACT:	**2 Year Contract, subject to renewal**
POSITION(S):	**One (1)**

The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") is a government utility providing power, water, and wastewater services in the Northern Mariana Islands (NMI), a U.S. Commonwealth in the western pacific. CUC is under a Stipulated order of the United States of America vs. the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Civil Case 08-0051 filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands.

The incumbent of this position is under the overall supervision of the Deputy Executive Director (Water and Waste Water) or his/her designee.

Duties:
- Coordinates and meets with other divisional sections and corporate divisions to coordinate activities and projects.
- Supervises engineering support staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work, conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staffs are trained; and, making, hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations.
- Performs project management activities to include preparing reports, memorandums and recommendations; developing scope of work, providing technical reviews; surveying for projects, evaluating proposals, monitoring project process, approving payment, and, recommending award of projects.
- Prepares engineering designs, plans and specifications, collects date and performs research.
- Troubleshoots systems and equipment. Reviews work performed by engineers. Performs other duties of a similar nature or level as required by CUC and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Minimum Requirements:
Education: Bachelor's Degree in Civil, Mechanical, or Electrical Engineering. Registration as a Professional Engineer pursuant to the National Council of Engineering Examiners standards in either the civil, mechanical or electrical branch; Experience of ten (10) or more years as a professional engineer.
Demonstrate the following: Proven management and communication skills; Demonstrated ability to lead, motivate, and develop staff; Competency and proficiency in overseeing major drinking water and wastewater systems during the periods of planning,, design, construction, and operation of drinking water systems' production, treatment, and distribution, and in wastewater treatment, collection and conveyance systems.
Knowledge of: Safe work practices; Applicable Federal, State, and/or Local laws, rules and regulations; Project management principles; Mathematical concepts; Construction principles; Engineering principles and practices.
Skills in: Monitoring and evaluating staff; Prioritizing and assigning work to staff; Managing multiple projects; Interpreting and applying Federal, State, and/or Local laws, rules and regulations; Interpreting drawings; Preparing a variety of technical report and/or documentation; Presenting technical information to management, public groups, and other related individuals; Reading and interpreting scaled drawings; Preparing specifications, plans, and cost estimates; Conducting studies; Using computers and related software applications; Communication, interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers,
supervisor, the general public, etc. sufficient to exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

•**Licensing**: o A valid driver's license with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

Relocation Expenses: If hired from outside the CNMI, relocation expenses are negotiable; but they are not to exceed $10,000.00 for moving to Saipan and not to exceed $10,000.00 for moving away from Saipan. Receipts will be required for justification. Other conditions may be applicable.

Submission process:
Please submit (1) a cover letter, (2) a resume, (3) a list of references, (4) a CUC Employment Application and (5) copy of supporting documents by one of the following means:
1. United States Postal Service, First Class Mail or Priority Mail:
   Human Resource Office
   Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
   P.O. Box 501220 Saipan, MP 96950-1220 USA
   *If you choose to submit via USPS, please still also fax "or" email "or" drop off your package.
2. Fax: 670-235-5131
3. Email: employment.applications@cucgov.org
4. Drop Off: Drop off your package at the CUC Human Resource Office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am to 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Otherwise, you may drop it off at the CUC Tinian or Rota Administration Office.

Policies: The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation is an equal opportunity provider and employer and will not discriminate or tolerate discrimination against any employee or applicant in any manner prohibited by law.

It is also the policy of CUC to achieve a drug-free workplace and person selected for employment will be required to pass a drug test which screens for illegal drug use prior to final appointment.

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Radewagen welcomes bipartisan boost of child tax credit

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) is welcoming the bipartisan extension of key 2017 tax cuts, especially the expanded child tax credit for families.

"The expanded child tax credit is an encouragement to families on a budget, keeping much-needed dollars in the pockets of hardworking parents," said Radewagen. "This tax legislation extends and updates the 2017 policies that helped spur economic growth prior to the COVID interruption to the economy. Now, a bipartisan majority in the House agreed to continue and update these policies so that people and small businesses have stability in their budgeting."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Delegate Uifa'atali Amata Radewagen (R-A. Samoa) with U.S House of Ways and Means Committee chair Jason Smith (R-MO).

On Wednesday, in a bipartisan vote of 357-70, the House passed a $78-billion tax package, titled the Tax Relief for American Families and Workers Act, that would temporarily expand the child tax credit and restore a number of business tax benefits. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Under the bill, the child tax credit expands yearly for the next three years, increasing the refundable cash portion to $1,800 per child for 2023, $1,900 for 2024, and $2,000 for 2025. The bill broadens the credit to reach more lower income households that pay less in income taxes, and adjusts the credit for inflation beginning in 2024, potentially increasing it further by another $100 by 2025.

The bill also allows businesses of all sizes to immediately deduct the cost of their U.S.-based Research & Development investments, instead of requiring that over five years. Nationally, the deal includes an addition to affordable housing tax credits, and expanded disaster relief for victims in cases of recent major federal declared disasters.

"Food, fuel, and many common goods became more expensive in general over the last several years, and people need every possible dollar to keep up," Radewagen concluded. "I especially appreciate seeing some bipartisan consensus come together on an important issue to get this done for families." ***(PR)***

HWPL's 'Discussion on Freedom of Speech' webinar sparks a cross-cultural dialogue

Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light, an international peace NGO, hosted a webinar titled "Discussion on Freedom of Speech."

The event brought together approximately 15 students and journalists from the Pacific Islands, including Fiji and Solomon Islands, alongside participants from South Korea.

Mavis May Gaunavou, a producer and presenter for Fiji TV, said, "The media in Fiji was oppressed for 16 years under a dictatorship, but the current Fijian government has promised freedom of expression for media outlets and active communication with the government. However, many journalists are still not able to fully enjoy freedom of expression because they are accustomed to the old practices."

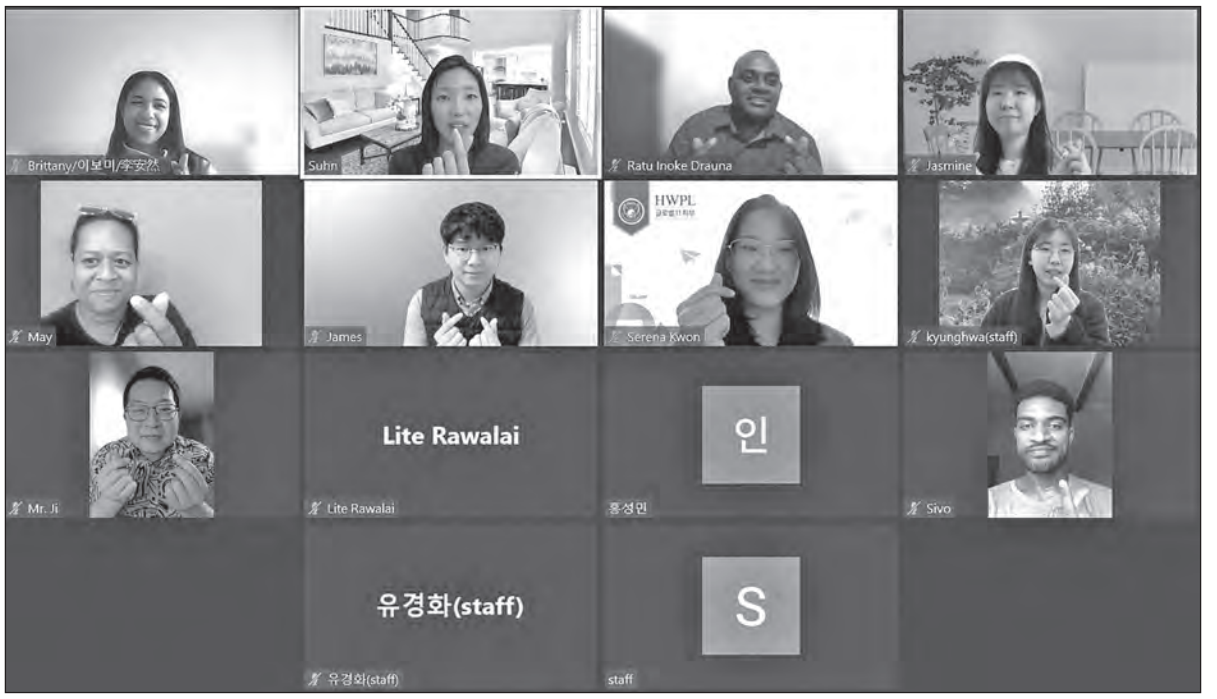
She said that the suppression of freedom of speech in Fiji has made it difficult to report critically on government corruption and human rights abuses, which has been a barrier to social development. She expressed concern that if the media is controlled by the government, the people's right to know is able to be violated and democratic social development can be hindered. She said that freedom of speech for the media, as well as the autonomy and responsibility of journalists, are also important for desirable national development.

Serena Kwon, a student at University of Seoul in South Korea, pointed out that freedom of speech has both positive and negative aspects. She said that freedom of speech for the media guarantees the people's right to know, but in Korea, sometimes it has been abused, leading to secondary damage cases such as excessive anonymity protection and invasion of privacy. She said, "Freedom of speech without tolerance and consideration is like violence." She said that considerate culture is needed to avoid infringing on the rights of others when exercising freedom of speech.

Nox Drauna, founder and director of ARUKA Fiji, shared about the importance of youth expressing their thoughts and feelings freely. He said that young people who do not have the opportunity to express their sadness, pain, etc. may be exposed to mental health problems such as depression and suicide.

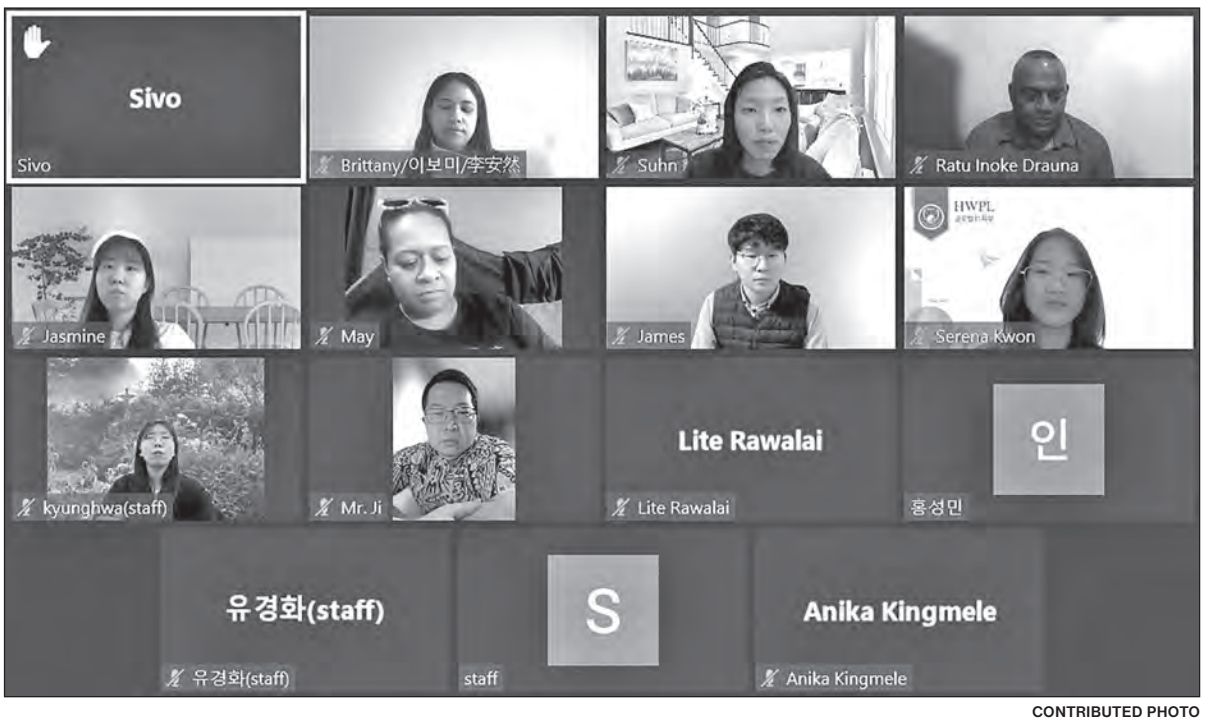
He said, "ARUKA Fiji has set up a hotline to help young people and their family who have lost their loved ones or friends and to allow them to express their pain freely and ask for help." He emphasized that education and support are also needed to create an atmosphere where children and young people can express their feelings and thoughts freely.

"This webinar was meaningful in that it provided an opportunity to think about the important topic, freedom of speech, from various perspectives," said Suhn Park, general director of the Department of International Law of HWPL. She explained the background of holding the event, saying, "We held this webinar to increase the accessibility to human rights, which can be a somewhat difficult and heavy topic, and to raise voluntary interest and participation of youth. We plan to continue to hold webinars on human rights-related issues that are of interest to students and youth on a quarterly basis." ***(PR)***



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

International peace NGO Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light recently held a webinar called "Discussion on Freedom of Speech."

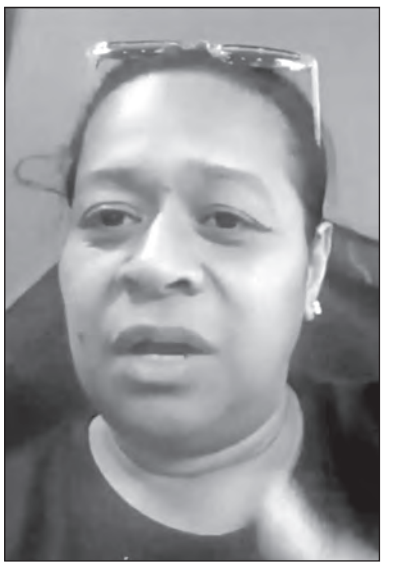


CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Approximately 15 students and journalists from the Pacific Islands, including Fiji and Solomon Islands, alongside participants from South Korea took part in the "Discussion on Freedom of Speech" webinar.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ARUKA Fiji founder and director Nox Drauna.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Fiji TV producer and presenter Mavis May Gaunavou.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

Defenders of 'democracy' want Voter ID off ballot

Nationally, Democrats profess a deep affection for "democracy"—all while trying to keep Donald Trump, and even potential third-party presidential challengers, off the ballot. In Nevada, their conviction to the concept of democracy runs just as shallow, as they seek to block voters from passing judgment on a Voter ID ballot question this fall.

In November, a GOP political action committee calling itself Repair The Vote filed a petition for a statewide referendum that would amend the Nevada Constitution to require that voters "present photo identification to verify their identity when voting in person at a polling place." It provides for numerous acceptable ID options and empowers state lawmakers to add additional alternatives at their discretion.

It also mandates that those who vote by mail include a numerical identifier in addition to a signature when submitting the ballot. That could be part of a driver's license or Social Security number.

In order to qualify the proposal for the ballot in November, the group has until early July to submit around 102,000 eligible signatures. Nevada voters would have to approve the amendment twice for it to become law.

Yet at this point it's unclear whether Nevadans will have the opportunity to pass judgment on the proposal. In December, an "immigrant advocacy group" filed suit to scuttle the amendment on the grounds that it might require a taxpayer outlay that isn't identified in the initiative's language. The group is represented by Democratic activists who moonlight as attorneys.

We'll leave the arguments for and against Voter ID for another day, but suffice it to say that the U.S. Supreme Court has found the requirement meets constitutional standards. In addition, 36 states have some sort of Voter ID mandate in place, and there's no evidence it has proved an obstacle to exercising the franchise.

Yet the leftists who now dominate the Democratic Party insist that requiring voters to confirm their identity isn't simply a commonsense election integrity safeguard, but rather a vast right-wing conspiracy to prevent a wide swath of the electorate from going to the polls. It is noteworthy, however, that they can't convince many of their political allies that this is true. Opinion surveys show strong support for Voter ID, even among Democrats.

Which raises the question: Why are progressives—particularly an "immigrant advocacy group"—so insistent on opposing Voter ID requirements?

The activist lawsuit is on shaky ground, as the measure could be implemented without any additional financial commitment from the state. In reality, though, it doesn't matter how the amendment is written. The self-described defenders of democracy will do everything they can to prevent state voters from ever seeing it. How democratic of them.

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Time to drop the term 'moderates'

By DAVE ANDERSON
The Fulcrum

Dave Anderson edited Leveraging: A Political, Economic and Societal Framework *(Springer, 2014), has taught at five universities and ran for the Democratic nomination for a Maryland congressional seat in 2016.*

If you held a conference for moderates—inviting federal politicians and citizens—it is unclear who would attend.

In Washington, moderates tend to be House members, senators, the president or vice president, or Cabinet officials who belong to either the Democratic or Republican party. One is therefore a moderate Democrat or a moderate Republican.

But throughout the country, many citizens who regard themselves as moderates do not identify with either political party. Instead, they identify as independents. Gallup reports that in 2023, 43% of voters identified as independents, 27% as Democrats and 27% as Republicans. It also reported that 36% of voters say they are moderates, 36% say they are conservative, and 25% say they are liberal. The group of independents overlaps with the group of moderates.

From the outset, therefore, we have a puzzle: The moderates in Washington are almost always Democrats or Republicans, while the moderate constituents are frequently independents.

We must accept that there is a major gap in the country, because the moderate independents essentially have no representation in the House and just two members of the Senate who speak for citizens who are alienated from the two major political parties.

A second major problem for the moderates is the lack of definition of "moderate." Some of the independents will be extremists—libertarians or socialists. But probably close to half of the moderates are going to say that they want the two parties to find a middle ground. And about half are going to say that their concept of being a moderate is about creating policies that reflect an interesting synthesis of what the two parties are advocating. They are ambitious moderates.

There we have it, two big challenges for the conference. First, how to overcome the gap that exists between the politicians who, with the exception of two members of the Senate, are all Democrats and Republicans. Second, how to make sense of the fact that about half of the moderates are low-key, split-the-difference people, while the other half are high-spirited, creative synthesis people.

The chief problem is that the moderates who are independents are frustrated with both political parties and therefore believe that the moderate Democrats and Republicans are part of a broken political system. It is a system marred by gerrymandering, an outsized role for money in politics, closed primaries in most states, and ranked-choice voting in only a handful of congressional districts. Independent moderates therefore feel unrepresented in Washington.

Moreover, the media and political organizations control the meaning of the term "moderate" and cubby hole the ambitious moderates in a way that makes it very difficult if not impossible for them to get their message across if they are politicians, and mobilize like-minded citizens if they are in the body politic.

In House races, for example, gerrymandering makes it very difficult for someone who does not take the party line to win a primary. Journalists will say precisely this during a campaign—emphasizing how moderates do not take a clear stand and have no clear constituency—and thus moderate candidates are running against candidates and the media at the same time.

If the moderates are ambitious rather than straightforward moderates, they will be even harder to explain by the media. They will more likely be called indecisive, wafflers and too out of the box for the electorate.

Political consulting 101 instructs candidates to define their opponents with concepts, words and categories that will disadvantage them at the polls. Our dysfunctional political system has systematically found ways to define moderates in ways that impede their ability to express themselves, mobilize, raise money and win elections. A starting point to address this problem is for everyone to drop the term moderates.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Grave peril of digital conspiracy theories: What happens when no one believes anything anymore?

By DAVID KLEPPER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—Days after Maui's wildfires killed scores of people and destroyed thousands of homes last August, a shocking claim spread with alarming speed on YouTube and TikTok: The blaze on the Hawaiian island was set deliberately, using futuristic energy weapons developed by the U.S. military.

Claims of "evidence" soon emerged: video footage on TikTok showing a beam of blinding white light, too straight to be lightning, zapping a residential neighborhood and sending flames and smoke into the sky. The video was shared many millions of times, amplified by neo-Nazis, anti-government radicals and supporters of the QAnon conspiracy theory, and presented as proof that America's leaders had turned on the country's citizens.

"What if Maui was just a practice run?" one woman asked on TikTok. "So that the government can use a direct energy weapon on us?"

The TikTok clip had nothing to do with the Maui fires. It was actually video of an electrical transformer explosion in Chile earlier in the year. But that didn't stop a TikTok user with a habit of posting conspiracy videos from using the clip to sow more fear and doubt. It was just one of severalsimilarvideos and images doctored and passed off as proof that the wildfires were no accident.

Conspiracy theories have a long history in America, but now they can be fanned around the globe in seconds, amplified by social media, further eroding truth with a newfound destructive force.

With the United States and many other nations facing big elections in 2024, , the perils of rapidly spreading disinformation, using ever more sophisticated technology such as artificial intelligence, now also threaten democracy itself—both by fueling extremist groups and by encouraging distrust.

"I think the post-truth world may be a lot closer than we'd like to believe," said A.J. Nash, vice president for intelligence at ZeroFox, a cybersecurity firm that tracks disinformation. "What happens when no one believes anything anymore?"

Extremists and authoritarians deploy disinformation as potent weapons used to recruit new followers and expand their reach, using fake video and photos to fool their followers.

And even when they fail to convince people, the conspiracy theories embraced by these groups contribute to mounting distrust of authorities and democratic institutions, causing people to reject reliable sources of information while encouraging division and suspicion.

Melissa Sell, a 33-year-old Pennsylvania resident, is among those who has lost faith in the facts.

"If it's a big news story on the TV, the majority of the time it's to distract us from something else. Every time you turn around, there's another news story with another agenda distracting all of us," she said. Sell thinks the Maui wildfires may have been intentionally set, perhaps to distract the public, perhaps to test a new weapon. "Because the government has been caught in lies before, how do you know?" she said.

Absent meaningful federal regulations governing social media platforms, it's largely left to Big Tech companies to police their own sites, leading to confusing, inconsistent rules and enforcement. Meta, the owner of Instagram and Facebook, says it makes an effort to remove extremist content. Platforms such as X, formerly known as Twitter, as well as Telegram and far-right sites like Gab, allow it to flourish.

Federal election officials and some lawmakers have suggested regulations governing AI, including rules that would require political campaigns to label AI-generated images used in its ads. But those proposals wouldn't affect the ability of extremist groups or foreign governments to use AI to mislead Americans.

Meanwhile, U.S.-based tech platforms have rolled back their efforts to root out misinformation and hate speech, following the lead of Elon Musk, who fired most of the content moderators when he purchased X.

"There's been a big step backward," said Evan Hansen, the former editor of Wired.com who was Twitter's director of curation before leaving when Musk purchased the platform. "It's gotten to be a very difficult job for the casual observer to figure out: What do I believe here?"

Hansen said a combination of government regulations, voluntary action by tech titans and public awareness will be needed to combat the coming wave of synthetic media. He noted the Israel-Hamas war has already seen a deluge of fake and altered photos and video. Elections in the U.S. and around the world this year will create similar opportunities for digital mischief.

The disinformation spread by extremist groups and even politicians like former President Donald Trump can create the conditions for violence, by demonizing the other side, targeting democratic institutions and convincing their supporters that they're in an existential struggle against those who don't share their beliefs.

Trump has spread lies about elections, voting and his opponents for years. Building on his specious claims of a deep state that controls the federal government, he has echoed QAnon and other conspiracy theories and encouraged his followers to see their government as an enemy. He even suggested that now-retired Army Gen. Mark Milley, whom Trump himself nominated to be the top U.S. military officer during his administration, was a traitor and deserved execution. Milley said he has had to take security precautions to protect his family.

The list of incidents blamed on extremists motivated by conspiracy theories is growing. The Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol, attacks on vaccine clinics, anti-immigrant fervor in Spain; and anti-Muslim hate in India: All were carried out by people who believed conspiracy theories about their opponents and who decided violence was an appropriate response.

Polls and research surveys on conspiracy theories show about half of Americans believe in at least one conspiracy theory, and those views seldom lead to violence or extremism. But for some, these beliefs can lead to social isolation and radicalization, interfering with their relationships, career and finances. For an even smaller subset, they can lead to violence.

The credible data that exists on crimes motivated by conspiracy theories shows a disturbing increase. In 2019, researchers at the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism identified six violent attacks in which perpetrators said their actions were prompted by a conspiracy theory. In 2020, the year of the most recent survey, there were 116.

Laws designed to rein in the power of social media and artificial intelligence to spread disinformation aren't likely to pass before the 2024 election, and even if they are, enforcement will be a challenge, according to AI expert Vince Lynch, CEO of the tech company IV.AI.

"This is happening now, and it's one of the reasons why our society seems so fragmented," Lynch said. "Hopefully there may be AI regulation someday, but we are already through the looking glass. I do think it's already too late."

To believers, the facts don't matter.

"You can create the universe you want," said Danielle Citron, a professor at the University of Virginia School of Law who studies online harassment and extremism. "If the truth doesn't matter, and there is no accountability for these false beliefs, then people will start to act on them."

Sell, the conspiracy theorist from Pennsylvania, said she began to lose trust in the government and the media shortly after the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, that left 20 students and six educators dead. Sell thought the shooter looked too small and weak to carry out such a bloody act, and the gut-wrenching interviews with stricken loved ones seemed too perfect, almost practiced.

"It seemed scripted," she said. "The pieces did not fit."

That idea—that the victims of the rampage were actors hired as part of a plot to push gun control laws—was notably spread by conspiracy theorist Alex Jones. The families of Sandy Hook victims sued, and the Infowars host was later ordered to pay nearly $1.5 billion in damages.

Claims that America's elected leaders and media cannot be trusted feature heavily in many conspiracy theories with ties to extremism.

In 2018, a committed conspiracy theorist from Florida mailed pipe bombs to CNN, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and several other top Democrats; the man's social media feed was littered with posts about child sacrifice and chemtrails—the debunked claim that airplane vapor clouds contain chemicals or biological agents being used to control the population.

In another act of violence tied to QAnon, a California man was charged with using a speargun to kill his two children in 2021. He told an FBI agent that he had been enlightened by QAnon conspiracy theories and had become convinced that his wife "possessed serpent DNA and had passed it on to his children."

In 2022, a Colorado woman was found guilty of attempting to kidnap her son from foster care after her daughter said she began associating with QAnon supporters. Other adherents have been accused of environmental vandalism, firing paintballs at military reservists, abducting a child in France and even killing a New York City mob boss.

The coronavirus pandemic, with its attendant social isolation, created ideal conditions for new conspiracy theories as the virus spread fear and uncertainty around the globe. Vaccine clinics were attacked, doctors and nurses threatened. 5G communication towers were vandalized and burned as a wild theory spread claiming they were being used to activate microchips hidden in the vaccine. Fears about vaccines led one Wisconsin pharmacist to destroy a batch of the highly sought after immunizations, while bogus claims about supposed COVID-19 treatments and cures led to hospitalizations and death.

Few recent events, however, display the power of conspiracy theories like the Jan. 6 insurrection, when thousands of Trump supporters stormed the Capitol, vandalized the offices of Congress and fought with police in an attempt to disrupt the certification of the 2020 election.

More than 1,200 people have been charged with Capitol riot-related crimes. About 900 have pleaded guilty or been convicted after trials. Over 750 have been sentenced, with roughly two-thirds receiving some term of imprisonment, according to data compiled by The Associated Press. Many of those charged said they had bought into Trump's conspiracy theories about a stolen election.

"We, meaning Trump supporters, were lied to," wrote Jan. 6 defendant Robert Palmer in a letter to a judge, who later sentenced him to more than five years for attacking police. "They kept spitting out the false narrative about a stolen election and how it was 'our duty' to stand up to tyranny."

Many conspiracy theorists reject any link between their beliefs and violence, saying they're being blamed for the actions of a tiny few. Others insist these incidents never occurred, and that events like the Jan. 6 attack were actually false-flag events concocted by the government and media.

"Lies, lies lies: They're lying to you over and over and over again," said Steve Girard, a Pennsylvania man who has protested the incarceration of Jan. 6 defendants. He spoke to the AP while waving a large American flag on a busy street in Washington.

While they may have taken on a bigger role in our politics, surveys show that belief in conspiracy theories hasn't changed much over the years, according to Joe Uscinski, a University of Miami professor and an expert on the history of conspiracy theories. He said he believes that while the internet plays a role in spreading conspiracy theories, most of the blame lies with the politicians who exploit believers.

"Who was the bigger spreader of COVID misinformation: some guy with four followers on Twitter or the president of the United States? The problem is our politicians," Uscinski said. "Jan. 6 happened, and people said: 'Oh, this is Facebook's fault.' No, the president of the United States told his followers to be at this place, at this time and to fight like hell."

Governments in Russia, China, Iran and elsewhere have also pushed extremist content on social media as part of their efforts to destabilize Western democracy. Russia has amplified numerous anti-U.S. conspiracy theories, including ones claiming the U.S. runs secret germ warfare labs and created HIV as a bioweapon, as well as conspiracy theories accusing Ukraine of being a Nazi state.

China has helped spread claims that the U.S. created COVID-19 as a bioweapon.

Tom Fishman, the CEO at the nonprofit Starts With Us, said that Americans can take steps to defend the social fabric by turning off their computer and meeting the people they disagree with. He said Americans must remember what ties them together.

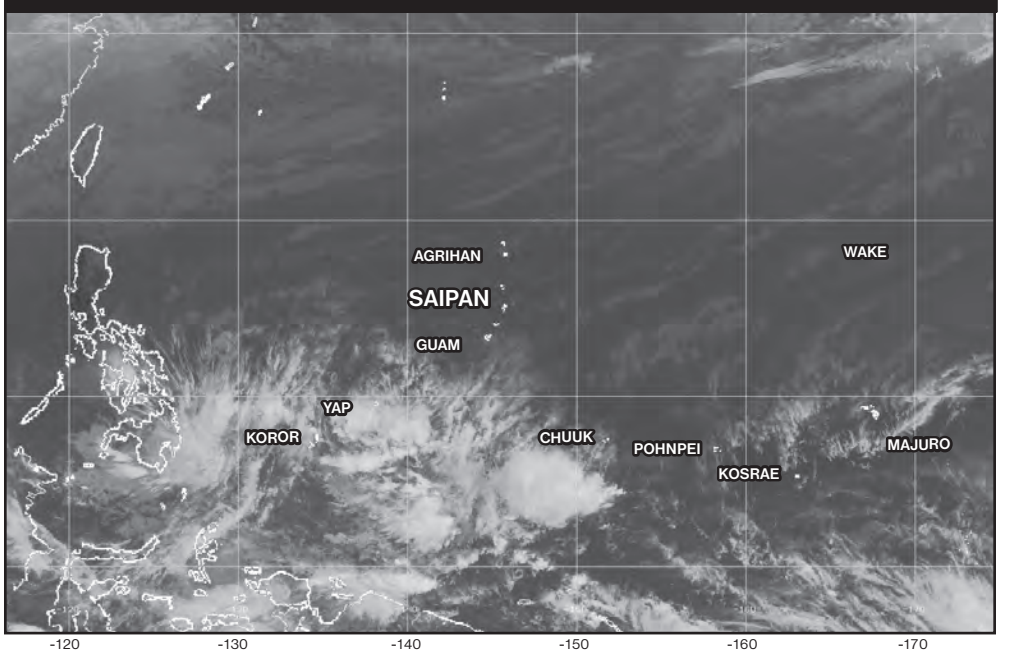
"We can look at the window and see foreshadowing of what could happen if we don't: threats to a functioning democracy, threats of violence against elected leaders," he said. "We have a civic duty to get this right."

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Northeast winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.	Partly cloudy with a 10 percent chance of light showers.
86 / 76°	86 / 76°	86 / 76°	86 / 76°	86 / 76°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:34 AM TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and surface observations indicate mainly patchy strato-cumulus clouds over the region. Surface winds are moderate at both Saipan and Guam. The Ipan Buoy showed combined seas around 8 feet mainly from the east, and Saipan Buoy shows seas 6 to 7 feet from the north and northeast.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°
Palau	Cloudy	85° / 77°
Yap	Cloudy	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	85° / 80°
Pohnpei	Clear	83° / 78°
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	83° / 78°
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	83° / 79°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:44 AM	6:17 PM
Thursday	6:44 AM	6:17 PM
Friday	6:44 AM	6:18 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	6:18 PM
Sunday	6:43 AM	6:19 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	4:01 AM	3:21 PM	-
Thursday	5:02 AM	4:27 PM	-
Friday	6:01 AM	5:34 PM	-
Saturday	6:54 AM	6:40 PM	-
Sunday	7:42 AM	7:42 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	79° / 64°
Beijing	Fair	40° / 21°
Hong Kong	Fair	69° / 62°
Honolulu	Showers	77° / 68°
London	Showers	46° / 43°
Los Angeles	Showers	64° / 56°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	84° / 72°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	73° / 57°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	78° / 68°
New York	Clear	46° / 32°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	48° / 41°
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	48° / 43°
Busan	Cloudy	45° / 37°
Rome	Showers	55° / 43°
Salem	Showers	68° / 51°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	43° / 28°
Seoul	Cloudy	38° / 31°
Tokyo	Rain	39° / 33°
Washington, DC	Clear	52° / 34°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
7:07 AM	High Tide	1.62
11:49 AM	Low Tide	1.24
4:29 PM	High Tide	1.68
-	-	-

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF FEBRUARY 1, 2024

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:35AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	3:10AM	10:30PM	4, 7 via ICN
7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
OZ626	3:10AM	6:55AM	4,7
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3461	2:40PM	6:45PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
OZ702/625	12:05PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6 via ICN
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3462	11:15PM	1:30PM+1	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3462	08:00AM	1:30PM	Daily Feb 7-16 only
7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	8:20PM	1:40AM+1	3, 6
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 2, 2024

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Daily
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	14:00	14:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1209	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	14:30	14:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2109	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan is region's No. 1 resort

Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan proudly announces its recognition as Micronesia's leading resort in 2023 by the esteemed World Travel Awards. This award reaffirms the Resort's commitment to providing comfort, premium facilities, and memorable experiences.

The World Travel Awards was established in 1993 to acknowledge and celebrate excellence across all key sectors of the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries globally. In 2023, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan was named Micronesia's Leading Resort during the 30th World Travel Awards, surpassing multiple nominees in the region.

With a total of 422 rooms, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan provides the perfect blend of adventure and relaxation. Guests are greeted by the resort's lush tropical gardens and panoramic view of Micro Beach along with warm and friendly hospitality ensuring a seamless arrival. We meet the needs of every guest with a variety of rooms and suites, such as mountain view and ocean view rooms, family rooms, suites, and accessible rooms.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

With a total of 422 rooms, Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan provides the perfect blend of adventure and relaxation.

Everything you need is conveniently located within the resort to discover or disconnect, including restaurants and bars, resort activities, and facilities. Its five restaurants and bars each have a unique culinary experience. Guests make the choice to dine and drink at The Terrace Restaurant for a tasty international buffet, Mari Bar for crafted cocktails and sharing plates, Ataari Dinner Show for a cultural experience, Market Place for a cup of coffee or a refreshing gelato, or Mai Teppanyaki for an authentic Japanese teppanyaki-style dining experience. To keep you occupied, you'll find daily activities ranging from sports like tennis and beach volleyball to unique experiences like canoe sailing and yoga sessions. Additionally, guests may utilize premium facilities, such as our fitness center, meeting rooms, lounge, and pools. Whether the need is relaxation or productivity, Crowne Plaza has the space to accommodate both leisure and business travelers.

For those who want to venture out and explore Saipan, the resort is nestled in the heart of Saipan's downtown area and is within walking distance of shopping, entertainment, attractions and other restaurant venues.

General manager Clayton Darlington expressed gratitude for the recognition and the dedication of the team at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, "We are thrilled and honored to receive the title of Micronesia's Leading Resort from the World Travel Awards. This accolade is a testament to the hard work and commitment of our team to deliver and create unforgettable moments for our guests. We remain committed to excellence, and we look forward to adding value in the hospitality industry."

Your island adventure awaits at Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan, Micronesia's leading resort.

For more information, email info.cprsaipan@ihg.com or call (670) 234-6412. ***(PR)***

US rolls out visa restriction policy on people who abuse spyware to target journalists and activists

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Biden administration announced Monday it is rolling out a new policy that will allow it to impose visa restrictions on foreign individuals involved in the misuse of commercial spyware.

The administration's policy will apply to people who've been involved in the misuse of commercial spyware to target individuals including journalists, activists, perceived dissidents, members of marginalized communities, or the family members of those who are targeted. The visa restrictions could also apply to people who facilitate or get financial benefit from the misuse of commercial spyware, officials said.

"The United States remains concerned with the growing misuse of commercial spyware around the world to facilitate repression, restrict the free flow of information, and enable human rights abuses," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement announcing the new policy. "The misuse of commercial spyware threatens privacy and freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association. Such targeting has been linked to arbitrary detentions, forced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings in the most egregious of cases."

Biden issued a executive order nearly a year ago restricting the U.S. government's use of commercial spyware "that poses risks to national security." That order required the head of any U.S. agency using commercial programs to certify that they don't pose a significant counterintelligence or other security risk, a senior administration official said.

It was issued as the White House acknowledged a surge in hacks of U.S. government employees, across 10 countries, who had been compromised or targeted by commercial spyware—and after the Biden administration effectively blacklisted its most prolific purveyor, Israel's NSO Group.

A senior administration official who briefed reporters ahead of Monday's announcement would not say if any particular individuals were in line to immediately be impacted by the visa restrictions. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House.

Officials said the visa restriction policy can apply to citizens of any country found to have misused or facilitated the malign use of spyware, even if they are from countries whose citizens are allowed entry into the U.S. without first applying for a visa.

Under U.S. law, visa records are confidential, so the State Department is not expected to publicly name individuals impacted by the policy.

Ron Deibert, the director of University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, a pioneer in exposing spyware mercenaries, called the White House announcement an "important step towards accountability" given that makers of the malware can rebrand and avoid sanctions. He said he wishes the U.S. could publicly "name and shame" those involved.

Still, Deibert said he's hopeful the measure would "bring some tangible pains to those people who profit from the horrific abuses of spyware, and the domestic and transnational repression that it facilitates. Other countries should follow the U.S. lead."

Mexico's president wants to guarantee people pensions equal to full salaries when they retire

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico's president said Monday he will propose guaranteeing people pensions equal to their full salaries at the time they retire, something done by no other country, not even those much richer than Mexico.

It was among a raft of 20 constitutional reforms that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has almost no hope of getting passed in the eight months he has left in office, but which could be part of a bid to attract voters in the June 2 presidential elections.

It may be just electioneering: López Obrador leaves office in September, and he really wants his party's candidate, former Mexico City mayor Claudia Sheinbaum, to win the presidential elections. He apparently hopes the promise of full-wage pensions could also help win his Morena party the two-thirds majority in Congress it needs to amend the Constitution.

But analysts say it may also be an attempt to set the agenda for the next administration by saddling any future president from Morena with high—and expensive—expectations.

"It's an election year, so all these reform initiatives can be seen as something to get people to vote for Morena," said Gabriela Siller, the director of analysis at Nuevo Leon-based Banco Base. But she notes it is also "a way of setting the political agenda for the next administration, a way of placing his imprint on the next administration."

For the moment, López Obrador doesn't have the votes in Congress to get the reforms passed, given that they require a two-thirds vote to amend the Constitution, and opposition parties are not likely to go along with it in the few months he has left in office.

For example, he wants the National Guard—now Mexico's main law enforcement agency—handed over to the army, a change Congress has already rejected. He also wants to e liminate most government regulatory and oversight agencies.

In announcing the measures Monday, the president claimed it was an attempt "to recover holy rights, guaranteed to Mexicans by God." It was among a package of reforms that included guaranteed annual increases in payments to the elderly and increases in the minimum wage and above the rate of inflation.

The reform proposals also included guaranteed access to the internet, a total ban on fracking, open-pit mining, GM corn, cruelty to animals and vaping pens.

López Obrador has made other unfulfilled promises in the past, like pledging Mexico would have a health care system "better than in Denmark." That is something that has obviously not come to pass in Mexico's crowded, ill-equipped hospitals, which frequently lack medications. He has also proposed recognizing the the 'right' of all Mexicans to own their own homes.

But the cost of what López Obrador is proposing for pensions is striking. Mexico's workforce is made up of about 60 million people and the reform would presumably apply to all of them.

At present, Mexicans can retire at 65, if they have worked 38 1/2 years, or 67 if they haven't. But there is no guaranteed pension payment. Apart from a few powerful unions representing government workers, there is no government pension program, though López Obrador has introduced supplementary payment programs for the elderly of a couple of hundred dollars per month.

Nation

Trump's fate, obscure section of Constitution collide at Supreme Court

WASHINGTON (AP)—From civil rights to privacy, the 14th Amendment has been a foundation for forging the norms of American law and democracy. But one of its provisions, adopted after the Civil War in 1868, has gotten almost no attention until now: That's Section 3, the part that's meant to keep former officeholders who "engaged in insurrection" from ever regaining power.

The Supreme Court on Thursday will be taking its first look at the insurrection clause in a case in which the stakes couldn't be higher.

Former President Donald Trump is the leading candidate for the Republican presidential nomination. But Republican and unaffiliated voters in Colorado argue that Trump is disqualified from being president again because he engaged in insurrection by trying to overturn his loss in the 2020 election, culminating in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. The Colorado case was one of several filed around the country seeking to block Trump from state ballots.

The voters say that if Trump can't be president again, he shouldn't be on the ballot, and the Colorado Supreme Court agreed in a first-of-its kind decision.

The case seems certain to bring on a collision of law and politics that the Supreme Court typically likes to avoid, but in this case, cannot ignore.

Trump appealed the Colorado ruling and that case will be argued on Thursday. The issue has come up elsewhere, but Colorado's court is the only one to rule against the former president. Maine's Democratic secretary of state also has determined that Trump shouldn't be on that state's primary ballot. Both the Maine and Colorado decisions are on hold pending the outcome in the Supreme Court.

The justices will be dealing with a handful of legal issues that include whether Trump did, in fact, engage in insurrection and whether the presidency is covered by the constitutional provision at issue.

Here is a look at the issues the court will confront:

WHO DECIDES?

There are several ways in which the court could avoid a definitive ruling, even though both sides say it's vitally important for the court to make a final decision now about Trump's eligibility for the ballot.

AP

The Supreme Court is seen at sunset in Washington, on Jan. 24, 2019. The Supreme Court will be taking its first look in the 156-year history of the 14th Amendment at a provision, Section 3, that's meant to keep former officeholders who "engaged in insurrection" from ever regaining power. The stakes couldn't be higher in arguments taking place on Thursday, Feb. 8, 2024.

The justices could issue a ruling that applies only to Colorado or say the issue is not yet ripe for a decision.

They also could conclude that the political branches of government and voters, and not the court, should decide whether to put Trump on the ballot.

Trump's attorneys raise the prospect of a national checkerboard of presidential elections if the issue is left to politicians, where some states' leaders might allow voters to choose the likely Republican nominee and some might not.

Attorneys for the voters trying to remove Trump from the ballot argue that the question is too important to be left to politics. It's one of following the plain language of the Constitution, which applies to everyone, regardless of how much political support they may have.

Still, there's a way for the court to toss the question to one group of politicians that would work slightly differently.

DOES CONGRESS HAVE A SAY?

Section 3 allows Congress to restore someone's eligibility by a two-thirds vote. But it says nothing about whether Congress has to do anything at the start of the process, before states can start applying the provision.

In 1869, after many people were already barred from office under the measure, Salmon Chase, the then-chief justice of the United States, found that there has to be congressional legislation creating a process to find someone covered by Section 3. Chase was acting as an appellate judge in an era when justices "rode circuit" before the creation of federal appeals courts.

A few months earlier, though, Chase took the opposite position in a case involving Jefferson Davis. Chase's contradictory assessments about Section 3, separated only by a few months, "are almost impossible to reconcile," law professor Gerard Magliocca has written.

Trump's attorneys and allies argue Congress needs to act, rather than leaving eligibility decisions to what they contend could be partisan courts. The attorneys seeking to disqualify Trump contend that Section 3 of the 14th amendment is just like its other provisions, ready to be applied without the need for additional legislation.

Some legal experts warn that kicking the fraught issue to a politically polarized Congress is perilous. It might mean the issue is not dealt with until Jan. 6, 2025, if Trump wins at the ballot box in November and Congress has to certify his election.

That "would risk catastrophic political instability, chance disenfranchising millions of voters, and raise the possibility of public violence," warns one friend of the court brief filed by legal experts.

DOES THE AMENDMENT EVEN APPLY TO TRUMP OR ANY CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT?

This is where things get technical.

Section 3 reads: "No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability."

Notice what office isn't specifically mentioned in the text—the presidency (or vice presidency).

Trump's attorneys argue that means the provision doesn't apply to presidents. The only reference to other officials is "officer of the United States," a term that appears elsewhere in the Constitution and, they contend, doesn't apply to the president. They also point out that the provision bars insurrectionists who took an oath to "support the Constitution." At his inaugural, Trump pledged to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution" in an oath "in which the word 'support' is nowhere to be found," his lawyer wrote. Finally, nothing in the text says someone can't be a candidate for these offices, so the court can't ban Trump from the ballot.

The attorneys trying to remove Trump contend this is just clever wordplay. The Supreme Court, they note, has never agreed with the highly technical argument that the president is not "an officer of the United States." The president isn't named in the text of Section 3, they argue, because the president is obviously an officer of the United States—why, they ask, would the drafters of the 14th Amendment want to bar low level oath-breakers from returning to office but allow one to become the leader of the country?

As for the oath, they wrote that dictionaries from the time of the nation's founding and Civil War era listed "support" and "defend" as synonyms for each other. If anything, they noted, "the President's oath is more demanding than mere 'support.'"

And the core of their case is that state courts like Colorado's have a duty to ensure that only qualified candidates are on the ballot. That means they can strike Trump for violating Section 3, just as they would remove someone who didn't meet the constitutional standard of being a natural-born citizen.

DID TRUMP ENGAGE IN INSURRECTION?

This might be the least technical of all the aspects of the case, but it also is highly contested.

Relying on the work of the congressional committee that investigated the Jan. 6 attack, the lawyers arguing to keep Trump off the ballot recite volumes of evidence of Trump's actions that they say incited the deadly attack, including his speech on that same day in which he urged supporters to "fight like hell."

They note that, in the post-Civil War period, Section 3 was used against not only people who fought for the Confederacy but against those who organized on its behalf and even issued rhetorical support for the uprising.

Trump's attorneys counter that the congressional Jan. 6 report is one-sided and that Trump in no way "engaged" in insurrection. They argue he didn't enter the Capitol, didn't tell his supporters to be violent and called for them to be peaceful at one point in his speech on the Ellipse and then in two subsequent tweets.

Instead, Trump's lawyers argue, the president was simply engaging in free speech to talk about an election he honestly believed had been stolen from him.

This is the most politically significant portion of the case. Even if the high court lets Trump stay on the ballot, the decision could play a major part in this year's presidential campaign, if it has anything to say about Trump's culpability for Jan. 6.

World

Shakeup of Ukraine's military leadership near at critical point in war

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he is thinking about dismissing the country's top military officer as part of a broader leadership shakeup, a possibility that has shocked the nation fighting a war to end Russia's invasion and also worried Ukraine's Western allies.

Zelenskyy confirmed in an interview with Italian broadcaster RAI TV released late Sunday that he was thinking about removing Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the popular commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces. He said he was contemplating the move to ensure the country remains led by individuals who are "convinced of victory" against Russia.

"A reset, a new beginning is necessary," Zelenskyy said. The review is "not about a single person but about the direction of the country's leadership."

"I'm thinking about this replacement, but you can't say here we replaced a single person," Zelenskyy said. "When we talk about this, I mean a replacement of a series of state leaders, not just in a single sector like the military. If we want to win, we must all push in the same direction, convinced of victory. We cannot be discouraged, let our arms fall. We must have the right positive energy."

Zelenskyy's comments were his first acknowledgement of Zaluzhnyi,'s possible firing. The potential ouster of the general already has caused an uproar in Ukraine and delighted the Kremlin as the war approaches its second anniversary.

Zaluzhnyi is widely respected among Ukrainian service members and considered a national hero. He is credited with stalling Russia's full-scale invasion in the early days of the war and expertly pushing back Moscow's troops.

Kyiv Mayor Vitalii Klitschko criticized the possibility of Zaluzhnyi's firing, saying it was due to the general's leadership that "many Ukrainians truly trust the armed forces."

"Today is a moment when politics might prevail over reason and country's interests," Klitschko said on social media. The mayor of Ukraine's capital city has been a vocal critic of Zelenskyy. The presidency in turn has accused Klitschko's office of inefficiencies.

It is unclear who might replace Zaluzhnyi and if his successor would command the same level of respect from Ukraine's troops and foreign defense leaders. His firing could risk degrading morale at a critical time in the war.

According to Ukrainian and Western media reports, Zelenskyy asked Zaluzhnyi to resign last week, but the general refused. Zaluzhnyi has not commented publicly on the reports.

Tensions between him and the president have been rising since a much anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive, which was launched in June with the help of an array of Western weapons, failed to produce major territory gains in Russian-occupied areas, disappointing allies.

Ukraine now is grappling with ammunition and personnel shortages while Russia is on the offensive, mounting relentless attacks. Four people were killed and at least one was injured in a Monday afternoon strike over the city of Kherson in southern Ukraine, the head of the local military administration said.

The need for a broad mobilization to beef up the number of Ukrainian troops has reportedly been one of the areas of disagreement between Zelenskyy and Zaluzhnyi.

Zelenskyy said at the end of last year that he had turned down the military's request to marshal up to 500,000 people, demanding more details about how the mobilization would be organized and paid for.

A rift between Zaluzhnyi and Zelenskyy first broke into the open in the fall when the general acknowledged in an interview with The Economist that the fighting with Russia had stalemated. The president strongly denied that was the case.

For his part, Zaluzhnyi has published two essays laying out his vision for how Ukraine can win the war. In his writings, he said it was critical for Ukraine to have air superiority, to extending its efficiency in countering enemy artillery, to build up reserves and to increase electronic warfare capabilities.

Dutch Defense Minister Kajsa Ollongren announced Monday that the Netherlands was preparing six additional F-16 fighter jets to give Ukraine on top of 18 the country previously pledged.

Ukraine's "aerial superiority is essential for countering Russian aggression," Ollongren said in a message on X, formerly Twitter. Denmark also has promised to donate 19 F-16s to Ukraine.

At least 6 Kurdish fighters killed in drone attack on Syrian base housing US troops

BEIRUT (AP)—A drone attack on a base housing U.S. troops in eastern Syria killed six allied Kurdish fighters late Sunday, in the first significant attack in Syria or Iraq since the U.S. launched retaliatory strikes over the weekend against Iran-backed militias that have been targeting its forces in the region.

The U.S.-backed, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces said Monday the attack hit a training ground at al-Omar base in Syria's eastern province of Deir el-Zour, where the forces' commando units are trained. No casualties were reported among U.S. troops.

An umbrella group of Iran-backed Iraqi militias, dubbed the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, released a video claiming responsibility for the attack and showing them launching a drone from an unspecified location.

In late January, a drone attack by the same group killed three U.S. troops and wounded dozens more at a desert base in Jordan. The U.S. military launched dozens of retaliatory strikes targeting Iran-backed militant groups in western Iraq and eastern Syria and also struck the Houthis in Yemen.

The SDF initially accused "Syrian regime-backed mercenaries" of carrying out Sunday's attack but in a second statement blamed "Iran-backed militias" after investigating the attack.

The umbrella group has launched dozens of drone attacks on U.S. military bases and troops in Iraq and Syria, and has called for the withdrawal of American soldiers from both countries.

The attack comes as tensions flare across the Middle East amid the Israel-Hamas war, which was sparked by Hamas' rampage in southern Israel on Oct. 7.

Meanwhile, Britain-based opposition war monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least seven SDF fighters were killed in the attack on Sunday and at least 18 others wounded, some in critical condition.

The attack late Sunday came two days after the U.S. military carried out strikes against militant targets linked to Iran in Syria and Iraq.

The SDF said it has the right to respond to the attack.

The U.S. military said it struck four anti-ship missiles on Sunday that were prepared to be fired at vessels in the Red Sea from Houthi rebel-controlled areas in Yemen.

In a statement early Monday, the U.S. Central Command said the strikes were in self-defense and came after forces determined the missiles "presented an imminent threat to U.S. Navy ships and merchant vessels in the region."

S. Koreans stay calm in face of North's escalating threats

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea's recent escalation of threats and more tests of weapons aimed at South Korea haven't done much to upset the calm in the nation's capital.

"We learned to be numb," said Renee Na, a 33-year-old office worker in Seoul who was one of a dozen South Koreans who sounded more indifferent than scared when talking with The Associated Press.

"Our generation grew up seeing North Korea use nuclear provocations as showmanship to maintain the stability of its regime," Na said. "When they act up, it doesn't feel like a real threat, but more like an annual event they stage when they need to shore up internal unity or want outside help."

That's a stark contrast to recent comments from Pyongyang, where leader Kim Jong Un said in January that his nation was abandoning its fundamental objective of peaceful reconciliation with South Korea. He also repeated a threat to annihilate the South if provoked.

At the same time, North Korea has conducted a streak of weapons testing, including what it described as simulated nuclear attacks on the South.

Worries about a direct provocation were amplified after the North fired hundreds of artillery shells into waters near its disputed western sea boundary with South Korea, prompting the South also to fire.

For now, there's concern in South Korea—but not alarm.

And it's nothing like 1994, when waves of panicked crowds emptied stores of instant ramen and rice after a North Korean negotiator threatened to turn Seoul into a "sea of fire."

North Korea has mastered a cycle of raising tensions with weapons demonstrations and threats before eventually offering negotiations aimed at extracting concessions. The result is that many South Koreans believe North Korea is using its old playbook to get attention during an election year in South Korea and the United States.

There's widespread doubt that North Korea, an autocracy that values the survival of the Kim dynasty over anything else, would risk war with U.S.-backed South Korea. Washington has warned repeatedly that the North's use of nuclear weapons would result in the end of Kim's rule.

The fast-paced, competitive nature of life in South Korea makes it easy for many to ignore North Korean threats. And public interest here in North Korea tends to mirror the rise and fall in tensions.

In Loving Memory
Jean Cushnie Sakovich
To all our friends in the Marianas,
Thank you very much for all your
unconditional love and support
Aloha, Hafa Adai and Big Hugs
Bill (Mr), Anneka and Jon

Good Housekeeping

HANDOUT

When it comes to a home, it is often judged both by what is on the inside as well as what is on the outside. First impressions begin with curb appeal as opposed to just when someone enters the home. The outdoor aesthetic is often decided by three key elements the home exterior, landscaping, and lighting. 19 N. Lake Circle 69. New shingles and roofing help to create strong curb appeal for this home.

By CATHY HOBBS
Tribune News Service

When it comes to a home, it is often judged both by what is on the inside as well as what is on the outside.

First impressions begin with curb appeal as opposed to just when someone enters the home. The outdoor aesthetic is often decided by three key elements: the home exterior, landscaping, and lighting.

Home exterior

The exterior of a home is often an indicator of what one will experience once inside the home. This is where maintenance can play a key role.

Curb Appeal Tips:

Maintain gutters.

Power wash the exterior annually.

Implement routine repairs.

Landscaping

Landscaping can be expensive. As a result, many homeowners on a budget often choose to omit or implement minimal landscaping. Investing in landscaping is a key to enhancing a home's curb appeal and it doesn't have to break the bank.

Rule of Thumb

Choose landscaping that can allow for year-round succession of bloom. The goal is to always have a presence of landscaping during each season of the year. Also, consider incorporating landscape that will grow at varying heights.

Lighting

From pathways and sidewalks to the home exterior and house numbers, lighting is not only a matter of safety but can also help to enhance the overall look and feel of the curb appeal of a home. While hard wired lights are preferred and relatively inexpensive to install, these days there are also a variety of solar powered lights that can quickly and easily enhance a home's appeal.

HANDOUT

Landscaping can be expensive. As a result, many homeowners on a budget often choose to omit or implement minimal landscaping. Investing in landscaping is a key to enhancing a home's curb appeal and it doesn't have to break the bank. A mix of landscaping of varying height and type creates an appealing first impression.

HANDOUT

Choose landscaping that can allow for year-round succession of bloom. The goal is to always have a presence of landscaping during each season of the year. Also, consider incorporating landscape that will grow at varying heights. A colorful mix of landscaping that can be enjoyed all year round fills the frontage of this home.

HANDOUT

Design Recipes Curb Appeal Tips: Maintain gutters. Power wash the exterior annually.Implement routine repairs. Lush landscaping helps to enhance the overall look and feel of this home.

Do I need regular drain cleaning?

ASK ANGI

By PAUL F. P. POGUE
Ask Angi

With holiday gatherings, extra guests, and the generally busy nature of the holidays, your pipes have gotten quite a workout. And if you live in a cold section of the nation, freezing could be a serious concern going forward. Right now is a good time to keep an eye on your pipes. Drain cleaning is an essential part of preventative maintenance. Drain cleaning makes your system more efficient, and can potentially avoid bigger plumbing problems down the line.

If you hear gurgling sounds, notice foul odors, experience recurrent clogs or see slow drainage, consider hiring a licensed plumber or drain cleaner to take a look. In some cases, you might be able to solve the problem yourself with a simple drain snake purchased at a big-box store. But more complex clogs will require the attention of a pro; running complicated equipment down your pipes is a delicate and complicated task that shouldn't be treated as a DIY task.

Your outside sewer lines are often prone to clogging, especially if you have a lot of trees and roots that might interfere with it. Even if you don't notice specific problems, pros suggest cleaning your sewer drain once every two years, in order to clear out built-up debris and prevent major blockages from happening. The average preventative sewer drain cleaning costs about $235.

The overall cost of a drain cleaning job depends on how far down the clog can be found, and where it originates. Snaking a toilet or kitchen sink tends to be the least expensive, starting around $110. Bathtubs and showers cost a bit more, usually starting around $225, and a sewer main line is the most expensive, especially if there are a lot of roots blocking it up. This cleaning can cost up to $800 if your pro needs to use particularly specialized equipment such as a roto-rooter or if it takes a long time.

Many drain cleaning jobs involve either snakes or long augers that slide down into the pipes and tear up or pull out debris. You can also consider a hydro jetting service. This uses high-powered water jets to blast through debris. It's a very effective and efficient method, but also tends to cost more—around $475 on average. Hydro jetting is not always recommended for older pipes, because the intense levels of pressure can damage them. More modern PVC pipes can usually handle hydro jets without much trouble.

Sometimes a camera inspection is required to identify the problems. Sewer scopes allow plumbers to get a clear visual all the way down in the pipes. It can cost several hundred dollars, but there's no better way to find out exactly what's wrong. Camera inspections can often be bundled with other services in order to bring the price down.

No matter what the final problem turns out to be, ask your plumber for advice on how to avoid future problems like it, and if they have recommendations for other possible issues to look out for.

Tweet your home care questions with #AskingAngi and we'll try to answer them in a future column.

Life & Style

Taylor Swift wins 4th album of the year at Grammy Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Taylor Swift won album of the year at the Grammy Awards for "Midnights," breaking the record for most wins in the category with four.

She began her speech by thanking her producer and friend Jack Antonoff and added, "I would love to tell you this is the happiest moment of my life," she told the crowd, but said she feels this happy when she creates music and plays shows.

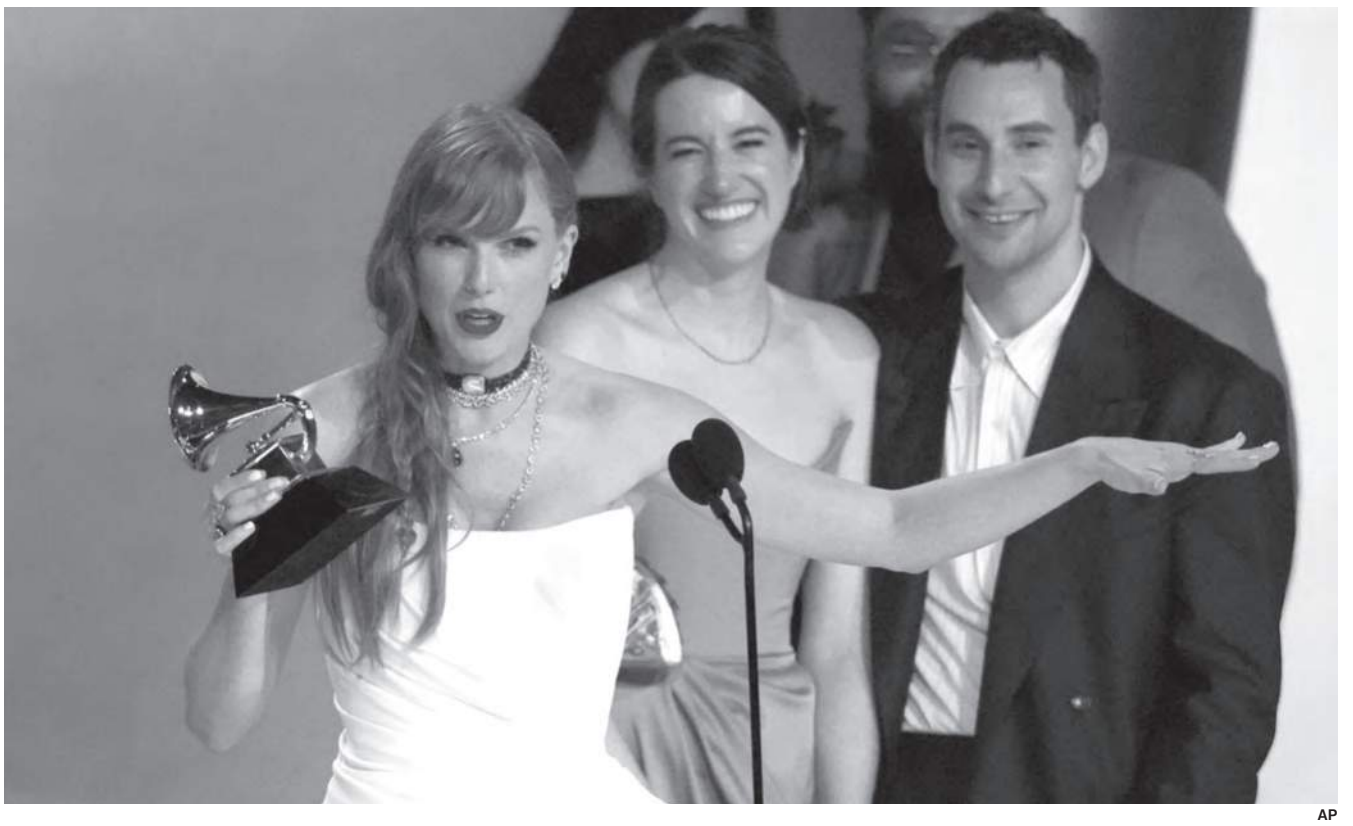
Earlier in the night, Taylor Swift used her 13th Grammy win on Sunday to announce her new album, "The Tortured Poets Department," will arrive April 19.

"I know that the way that the Recording Academy voted is a direct reflection of the passion of the fans," she said while accepting the best pop vocal album award. "So, I want to say thank you to the fans by telling you a secret that I've been keeping from you for the last two years."

One of the night's biggest awards, record of the year, went to Miley Cyrus for "Flowers," her second-ever Grammy and second of the night.

"This award is amazing. But I really hope that it doesn't change anything because my life was beautiful yesterday," she said in her speech.

Victoria Monét won best new artist. "Thank you to the champagne-servers tonight," Monét began her acceptance speech. "Thanks to my mom, a single mom raising this really bad girl." Then she started to cry, telling the room that this award was "15 years in the making."



AP

Taylor Swift accepts the award for album of the year for "MIdnights" during the 66th annual Grammy Awards on Sunday, Feb. 4, 2024, in Los Angeles.

Billie Eilish won song of the year for writing the "Barbie" hit, "What Was I Made For?" She thanked director Greta Gerwig for "making the best movie of the year."

It was just one of several standout moments from Sunday's show, hosted by Trevor Noah and broadcast live from Cypto.com Arena in downtown Los Angeles.

Karol G made Grammy history Sunday by becoming the first female performer to win best música urbana album for her blockbuster "Mañana Será Bonito" record.

"This is my first time at the Grammys," she told the audience in English. "And this is my first time holding my own Grammy."

Performances were many. Olivia Rodrigo brought her bloodsucking ballad "vampire" – or in this case, bloodletting, as red liquid dripped from the walls behind her. Joni Mitchell, 80, made Grammy history by performing "Both Sides Now" from her 1969 album "Clouds"; Travis Scott did a medley of "My Eyes," "I Know?," and "Fein." Burna Boy was joined by Brandy and 21 Savage and did "On Form," "City Boys," and "Sittin' on Top of the World."

A long and touching In Memoriam segment celebrated many of the musical greats lost last year. Stevie Wonder performed "For Once in My Life" and "The Best Is Yet To Come" in honor of Tony Bennett; Annie Lennox delivered "Nothing Compares 2 U" for Sinéad O'Connor. "Artists for ceasefire, peace in the world," Lennox said at the end of the song, her fist extended in the air.

Jon Batiste did a medley of "Ain't No Sunshine," "Lean On Me," and finally "Optimistic" with Ann Nesby for the late great music exec Clarence Avant. Oprah introduced a fiery Tina Turner tribute of "Proud Mary" by Fantasia Barrino and Adam Blackstone.

SZA also took the stage – performing a medley of her larger-than-life hits "Snooze" and "Kill Bill," joined by dancers wielding katanas. Later, she'd take home the trophy for best R&B song—for "Snooze," handed to her by Lizzo. SZA ran to the stage and gave a charming, out of breath speech because she was "changing, and then I took a shot."

Luke Combs' delivered a heartfelt rendition of "Fast Car" with Tracy Chapman – his cover of the Chapman classic has dominated country radio and won him song of the year at the 2023 CMAs. In 1989 the song won Chapman best female pop vocal performance.

Dua Lipa opened the show with a high-octane medley: first, a tease of her forthcoming single, "Training Season," then, her most recent single, "Houdini," and finally, her disco-pop "Barbie" hit "Dance the Night."

Eilish and Finneas also brought "Barbie" to the Grammys stage with live string accompaniment. They were followed by Cyrus, who performed "Flowers" for the first time live on television.

"Why are you acting like you don't know this song?" she teased the crowd—John Legend and wife Chrissy Teigen were among those in the audience who got up to dance—and later cheered mid-song, "I just won my first Grammy!"

Best country album went to Lainey Wilson for "Bell Bottom Country,"—her very first Grammy—as presented by Kacey Musgraves. "I'm a fifth-generation farmer's daughter," she told the crowd, adding that she's a "songwriting farmer," and that's where the musical magic came from.

Jay-Z was awarded the Dr. Dre Global Impact Award and used his speech to talk about the hip-hop greats that came before him – and heavily suggesting at the Grammys history of placing rap on the backburner – or at the very least, not in the televised version of the show. (This year, there were no rap categories on the telecast, but two pop, one Latin, one country and one R&B.)

"We want you all to get it right," he said. "At least get it close to right," before switching focus to Beyoncé. "Most Grammys, never won album of the year. How does that work?"

Extramarital affair threatens woman's mental health

DEAR ABBY: I have been involved with a married man for the last five years. He lied to me about his status. He told me that a woman he'd had a 15-year relationship with had left him. I recently learned he has been with her for more than 30 years, and she's the mother of his kids. I have tried to walk away many times, but I always go back. I don't blame him, but I am very hurt by the deceptions. I have been hospitalized for depression three times since I've been with him. I'm not a homewrecker. He's not a demon. I just need help. I can't go on like this. My mental health is deteriorating rapidly now. Please help me.

HEARTBROKEN IN MARYLAND

DEAR HEARTBROKEN: You are stuck in a self-defeating cycle that isn't going to change. In my book, this married man IS a demon. He is an awful person with no conscience. Seeing the effect this affair has had on you (three hospitalizations for depression!?), if he had ANY conscience at all, he would have ended it. If you don't have a licensed mental health professional to talk with to help you disentangle yourself permanently from this destructive cycle, PLEASE ask for a referral to one now, before you have to be hospitalized again.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I was a devoted son. I called and visited my parents regularly and took them on trips with my family. I have two grown kids I seldom see or hear from. Some of my friends tell me their kids are the same. Is this common with this generation or is it an anomaly?

WONDERING IN FLORIDA

DEAR WONDERING: It may be more common today. Whether because of insensitivity, the fact that younger people face more challenges and distractions than previous generations or some unresolved resentment toward their parents, I can't say. But your problem seems to have become less unusual over the last several decades. Phone calls have been replaced by texting, but texts lack the warmth and immediacy of verbal communication that former generations enjoyed. Could that be what you are missing?

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I have a wonderful husband and four beautiful kids. But lately I've started crushing on his best friend, and I sometimes fantasize about him. I love my husband with all my heart, and I'm truly happy with our marriage. How can I rid myself of these feelings? I don't know what they mean.

MYSTIFIED IN MISSOURI

DEAR MYSTIFIED: It means you are human. A way to control your fantasies would be to quit feeling so guilty about having them. You are far from the only woman to develop crushes on unattainable men. Fan clubs for actors and television personalities come immediately to mind. The time to worry and possibly seek professional help would be when the crush starts having a negative effect on your marriage. You say you love your husband. If that's true, show him the respect he deserves by reminding yourself not to follow through on those fantasies.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

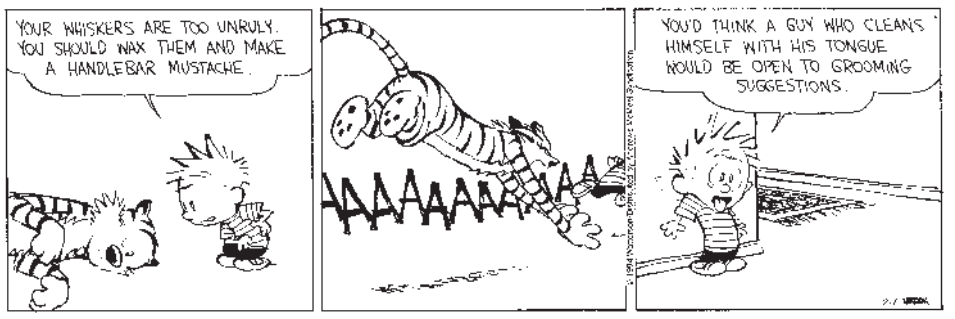
By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

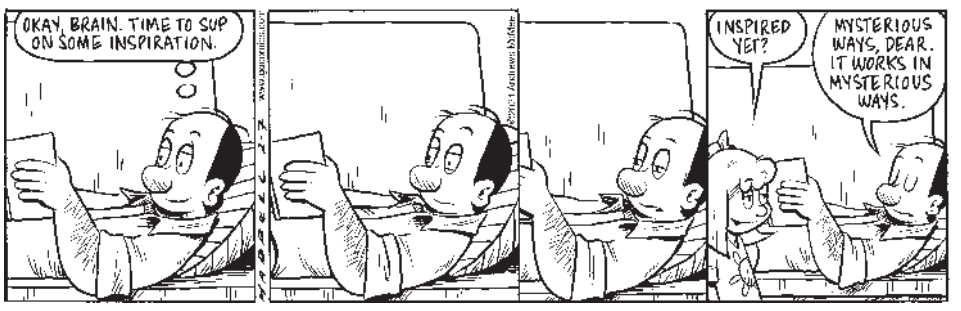

YOUR WHISKERS ARE TOO UNRULY. YOU SHOULD WAX THEM AND MAKE A HANDLEBAR MUSTACHE.
AAAAAAAAAA
YOU'D THINK A GUY WHO CLEANS HIMSELF WITH HIS TONGUE WOULD BE OPEN TO GROOMING SUGGESTIONS.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Her" actress Rooney
5 Director Lee
8 Some GIs
12 Earth sci.
13 Extinct bird
14 Asian nation
15 Warning to a speeder
17 "Baseball Tonight" channel
18 Mortal
19 Vent covers
21 Candied veggies
24 PC port
25 Barks
28 Unpaid
30 Fireplace residue
33 Alias abbr.
34 Fire sign?
35 NASA moon craft
36 "Help!"
37 Aesopian also-ran
38 Slender
39 Eastern "way"
41 Noble Italian family
43 Not as loud
46 Desert haven
50 "Peek-—!"
51 Far right, on a highway
54 Weaver's device
55 Neckline shape
56 Diminutive suffix
57 Sneakers brand
58 Cushion
59 Antique cars

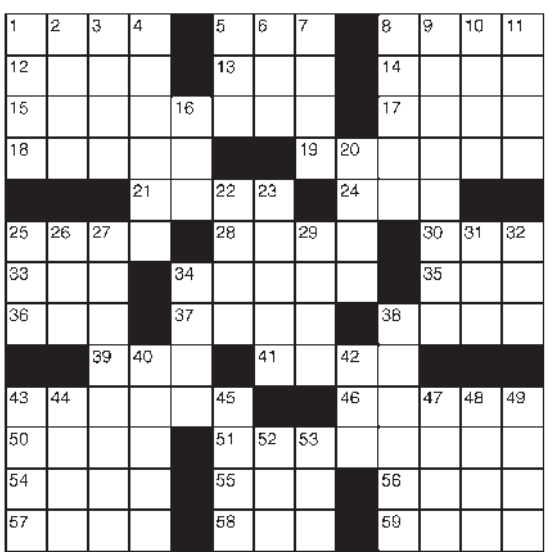
DOWN

1 Screen material
2 Rights gp.
3 Leeway
4 Nonstop
5 "I love," to Livy
6 Promptly
7 Jets or Sharks
8 Entreaties
9 Pitcher's tactic
10 Deal (with)
11 Taxpayer IDs
16 "CSI" find
20 Uncivil
22 NYC gallery
23 Took an oath
25 Remote batteries, often
26 "Top Hat" studio
27 Wendy's offering
29 Stretches (out)
31 Six, in Milan
32 "Let me think ..."
34 Monopoly token
38 Paint basecoat
40 Molecule parts
42 AAA job
43 Polio vaccine pioneer
44 Reed instrument
45 Invitation notation
47 Appease
48 Division word
49 Beholds
52 Tony winner Salonga
53 British ref. work

Solution time: 23 mins.

D	O	R	M	■	L	A	W	■	A	E	R	C
A	R	E	A	■	O	N	A	■	T	R	I	O
B	A	N	K	L	O	A	N	■	R	A	M	P
■	■	■	E	O	N	■	N	O	I	S	E	S
S	F	F	M	S	■	I	A	R	A	■	■	■
A	C	M	E	■	B	A	B	Y	L	O	V	E
A	R	T	■	F	E	D	E	X	■	K	A	Y
B	U	S	L	I	N	E	S	■	B	R	I	E
■	■	■	E	N	D	S	■	M	O	A	N	S
E	U	R	E	K	A	■	G	A	L	■	■	■
T	B	A	R	■	B	R	U	C	E	L	E	E
N	E	V	E	■	L	A	M	■	R	O	U	T
A	R	I	D	■	E	M	S	■	O	G	R	E

Yesterday's answer 2-7



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Ashton Kutcher, 46; Chris Rock, 59; Garth Brooks, 62; James Spader, 64.

Happy Birthday: Gather facts and gauge the possibilities this year. A secretive approach will keep interference at bay. Clear vision is necessary to avoid an oversight. Knowledge and balance are essential if you plan to reach your goal. Set standards, recognize what's possible and don't be afraid to do things in unison. Distance yourself from those who dominate your time and talent. Your numbers are 3, 14, 25, 31, 34, 36, 42.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Size up what's happening around you, and make decisions that don't conflict with your beliefs or goals. Be true to yourself; you won't regret the outcome. Let go of what's no longer working for you and head in a new and exciting direction. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: Connect with someone you find inspiring, join a group or start a project that motivates you to impact your life positively. Make what you do or pursue count, and let your actions be what onlookers remember. Choose action over rhetoric. ✪✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: It's prep time. Work behind the scenes to develop a foolproof plan that offers you the confidence necessary to achieve your goal. Share only what's needed, and you'll deter someone from interfering with your plans or stealing your ideas. Protect what's yours and fulfill your duties. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: You can partner mentally, emotionally and physically, but don't get involved in a joint financial venture. Keep your money separate and your debt low. Put your energy into discovering new applications for something you want to pursue. Romance is in the stars. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Set guidelines and stick to them. Veering too far off course will turn into a costly affair. An associate will be eager to make you look bad. Don't trust anyone with sensitive information. Keep a low profile and a high work ethic, and finish what you start. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Don't dismiss what others do or say. Utilize your skills when it's time to follow through. Changing your pace and place will motivate you to do the work yourself. Don't underestimate your skills, financial situation or associates. Attend a networking event. ✪✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: You'll be pulled in different directions if you let too many outside influences confront you. Don't trust what others tell you; embark on a mission to discover the statistics before you engage in a debate. Preparation and proof will ensure success. Leave nothing to chance. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Familiarize yourself with the rules before engaging in something mentally challenging. Fulfill promises swiftly; your profile will stand out, leading to more significant opportunities. An unexpected proposal will change how you proceed. Be responsive. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Coast along, be observant and educate yourself regarding investments and money matters. Don't boast about what you've accumulated; someone will take it as an invitation to take advantage of you. Move forward humbly and with reservations when dealing with smooth operators. Protect your interests. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: You can improve your surroundings without spending by selling off items that have become dust collectors and paying off some debt. Use your resources to turn a profit and to encourage personal growth and positive lifestyle changes. Romance is favored. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Remain grounded, regardless of what others say. You have more leverage than you realize, but nothing will happen if you don't concentrate on putting your skills to good use. Trust your instincts and put in the time, and something positive will transpire. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Embrace an opportunity that encourages using your resources uniquely. Let your mind wander, and reach out to people in the know who can point you in a direction that sparks your imagination and encourages you to use your skills to raise your standard of living. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are demonstrative, eager and a humanitarian. You are unique and curious.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8							3
	5			9			2	
	6	3		8			9	
					3			4
8	4	6			7			1
		2	1	4				6
1			2			5	6	
4				5			3	
6								

Difficulty: ★★★ 2/7

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

3	5	4	6	9	2	8	7	1
9	1	6	8	7	4	2	3	5
2	7	8	1	3	5	9	6	4
7	8	9	2	5	3	1	4	6
6	2	3	7	4	1	5	9	8
5	4	1	9	6	8	7	2	3
4	9	7	5	1	6	3	8	2
8	6	5	3	2	9	4	1	7
1	3	2	4	8	7	6	5	9

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Difficulty: ★★ 2/6

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

SNOWMOBILING TIME **Solution: 6 letters**

B	I	N	D	I	N	G	S	S	E	L	G	G	O	G
A	A	P	O	L	A	R	I	S	T	H	G	I	L	A
L	H	N	I	A	T	N	U	O	M	L	S	I	O	R
A	A	J	F	S	K	I	D	O	O	H	D	P	R	M
N	M	H	A	Ⓕ	Ⓐ	Ⓢ	Ⓣ	V	E	E	E	R	T	S
C	A	C	G	C	C	E	E	L	E	A	E	O	N	R
E	Y	T	R	I	K	S	M	N	K	E	P	T	O	E
R	T	U	I	N	E	E	I	S	H	C	S	E	C	M
U	E	L	P	P	T	L	T	R	B	A	I	C	W	R
T	F	C	O	T	A	O	S	S	O	R	I	T	O	A
N	A	L	F	N	E	R	I	D	E	R	A	L	D	W
E	S	I	E	S	W	I	N	T	E	R	R	K	A	D
V	R	R	E	D	W	O	P	A	S	S	O	I	E	N
D	D	L	E	I	H	S	D	N	I	W	C	F	M	A
A	L	P	I	N	E	R	A	B	E	L	D	N	A	H

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Adrenaline, Adventure, Alpine, Arms, Balance, Banff, Bindings, Brake, Clutch, Control, Drift, Fast, Forest, Glide, Gloves, Goggles, Grip, Hail, Handlebar, Hand Warmers, Helmet, Jacket, Lights, Meadow, Mirror, Mountain, Pass, Peaks, Polaris, Powder, Protect, Race, Ride, Safety, Ski-Doo, Sleigh, Slope, Speed, Toes, Windshield, Winter, Yamaha

Yesterday's Answer: Consultant

The NEW Wonderword Grand Millennium #1 in LARGE PRINT is now available at: www.WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Donovan Mitchell, Cavs keep rolling, beat Kings, 136-110

CLEVELAND (AP)—Donovan Mitchell was stuck in the foul lane after picking up his dribble, so he tossed the ball off the backboard to himself and dunked.

"I've never thrown it left-handed," Cleveland's All-Star guard said with a laugh. "Sometimes you just make (stuff) up."

The Cavaliers can do no wrong right now.

Mitchell scored 29 points, Max Strus added 22 and Cleveland beat the Sacramento Kings 136-110 on Monday night for its sixth straight win and 14th in 15 games.

Cleveland is a league-best 19-4 since Dec. 16—when starters Darius Garland and Evan Mobley went down indefinitely with injuries—and the Cavs have climbed to No. 2 overall (by percentage points over Milwaukee) in the Eastern Conference.

"It's good, but it's February," Mitchell said. "We're just going to try to continue to play the way we've been playing. We're being cohesive as a group. We're playing great, but the biggest thing is: How do we keep going?

"Everybody has risen to the occasion when their number has been called. Heading into the All-Star break we're playing good ball, and we want to keep it going."

The Cavs matched a season high with 23 3-pointers in winning their ninth straight home game and eighth in nine against teams from the West.

At the moment, it doesn't matter who the Cavs are facing. They're clicking on all cylinders offensively and are healthy after being without Garland (broken jaw) and Mobley (knee surgery) for six weeks.

Sacramento's Domantas Sabonis had 12 points, 19 rebounds and 15 assists for his 15th triple-double this season, tying him with Denver's Nikola Jokic for the league lead.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell (45) reacts after hitting a basket in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings, Monday, Feb. 5, 2024, in Cleveland.

Harrison Barnes added 22 points and De'Aaron Fox had 19 as the Kings finished 5-2 on a season-long trip.

"Tough night for us," Kings coach Mike Brown said. "(Coach) J.B. (Bickerstaff) and his team were really good. We didn't do a good job getting to their hot players and they shot the mess out of the basketball. They made 23 3s, shot 56%, that's almost unheard of. Offensively, we were fine, but they were so good they took the wind out of us."

Jarrett Allen had 19 points and Mobley added 14 rebounds and seven assists in his fourth game back since undergoing surgery last month.

The Cavs pushed a 15-point halftime lead to 21 in the third quarter before Fox hit a 3 and Kevin Huerter scored to pull the Kings within 13.

Sabonis then grabbed a defensive rebound, but while he was looking to make an outlet pass, Strus sneaked up behind him, tipped the ball away from the Kings' big man and buried a 3-pointer from the corner.

"Got lucky," said Strus, who caught Sabonis on a similar play in the first half. "Got him twice. Any play to help impact winning, I'm willing to do so. Got lucky there and made a big shot."

Mitchell then hit another 3 to put the Cavs ahead 101-82.

The Kings closed within 10 early in the fourth, but Mobley muscled inside for a bucket and the Cavs hit three 3-pointers—two by Caris LeVert—in a span of 79 seconds to regain control.

Afterward, Mitchell said he plans to participate in the All-Star 3-Point contest this month in Indianapolis.

"I don't think I'm labeled as a shooter, like the guys who are in it are," Mitchell said. "But I believe I can go out there and win it."

The game was a homecoming for Brown, who had two stints with the Cavs (2006-10 and 2013-14). Brown has fond memories of his time in Cleveland, where he got his first head coaching gig and raised a family.

This is a big week away from the floor for Brown. His youngest son, Cameron, is a first-year quality control coach for the Super Bowl-bound San Francisco 49ers.

"I think I'm more excited than he is," cracked Brown, who won't be able to attend the game because the Kings play Sunday at Oklahoma City. "But I'll be watching with my 49ers shirt on."

LAKERS 124, HORNETS 118

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Anthony Davis had 26 points, 15 rebounds and 11 assists for his third career triple-double, and Los Angeles beat shorthanded Charlotte.

D'Angelo Russell scored 28 points and LeBron James had 26 for the Lakers, who won their third straight and concluded a 4-2 trip.

Miles Bridges scored a career-high 41 points and rookie Brandon Miller added 33 points for the Hornets, who lost their eighth straight since trading Terry Rozier to Miami.

MAVERICKS 118, 76ERS 102

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Kyrie Irving had 23 points and eight assists and Luka Doncic scored 19 points as Dallas beat Philadelphia.

Irving and Doncic played together for just the 23rd time in the Mavericks' 50 games. Josh Green scored 20 points for the Mavericks.

Kelly Oubre Jr. scored 19 points, Tobias Harris had 17 and Tyrese Maxey 15 for the Sixers, who fell to 4-11 without injured MVP Joel Embiid, who's set for knee surgery this week.

WARRIORS 109, NETS 98

NEW YORK (AP)—Stephen Curry scored 29 points, Jonathan Kuminga added 28 points and 10 rebounds, and Golden State shook off a poor start to beat Brooklyn.

The Warriors outscored the Nets 66-49 in the second half, even while going just 4 for 22 from behind the arc in the game—with all the makes by Curry.

Cam Thomas scored 18 points but shot 4 for 21 for the Nets, who had won three of four. Nic Claxton added 15 points and a career-high seven blocked shots before being ejected in the fourth quarter for a flagrant foul against Brandin Podziemski, who had 15 points and 11 rebounds.

PELICANS 138, RAPTORS 100

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Brandon Ingram made a career-high eight 3-pointers and scored 41 points, and New Orleans routed Toronto.

Ingram hit 16 of 21 shots and also dished out nine assists in 30 minutes. He capped his performance by hitting five straight 3s at the end of the third.

CJ McCollum scored 20 points for the Pelicans, who won their third straight and sent the Raptors to their eighth loss in nine games.

Rookie Gradey Dick had a season-high 22 points for the Raptors.

CLIPPERS 149, HAWKS 144

ATLANTA (AP)—Kawhi Leonard scored 36 points, including 11 in the fourth quarter, and Los Angeles beat Atlanta to conclude a 6-1 road swing.

James Harden had 30 points and 10 assists, and Paul George scored 18 for Los Angeles.

De'Andre Hunter matched a season high with 27 points for the Hawks. Trae Young added 25 points.

Cleveland Cavaliers guard Donovan Mitchell (45) reacts after hitting a basket in the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Sacramento Kings, Monday, Feb. 5, 2024, in Cleveland.

Earl Cureton, who won two NBA titles, has died

DETROIT (AP)—Earl "The Twirl" Cureton, who won two NBA championships in 12 seasons in the league, has died. He was 66.

Cureton, who served as a community ambassador for the Detroit Pistons for the last 10 years, passed away "unexpectedly" on Sunday morning, according to a release from the Pistons. No other information was provided by the team.

"Earl was one of the most generous, positive and caring people I knew," Pistons owner Tom Gores said. "He was a loving father, devoted to his family, and I was honored to be his friend. He was a champion as a player and an important ambassador in our community. We are heartbroken over his loss."

The 6-foot-9 Cureton began his collegiate career with Robert Morris before transferring to Detroit Mercy for his final two seasons under then-coach Dick Vitale. The Detroit native was selected by Philadelphia in the third round of the 1979 NBA draft.

Cureton averaged 5.4 points and 4.7 rebounds in 674 NBA games. He played for Philly, Detroit, Chicago, the Los Angeles Clippers, Charlotte, Houston and Toronto. He was part of championship teams with the 1982-83 76ers and 93-94 Rockets.

He also coached in the NBA, United States Basketball League and Continental Basketball Association after his playing career.

"He was a tremendous teammate, tough competitor, a champion and a great human being," former Pistons guard Isiah Thomas said in the team's release. "Earl always held the Detroit community close to his heart and worked tirelessly to make a difference for the city he loved. He will be greatly missed."

Portland Trail Blazers coach Chauncey Billups took the news of his former teammate's death hard.

"He was just a beautiful dude," Billups said before the Trail Blazers' game in Denver on Sunday night. "I spent a lot of time with him in Detroit, obviously. Just a big teddy bear. Always so fun. He had one of those infectious laughs where whenever he laughed he made everybody laugh. Never had a bad day, ever. I marvel at guys like that, people like that. The world can be really rough and tough and they never see it that way, you know? And I loved that about him. Every time I'd go to Detroit, I'd give him a big hug. So, that was tough news today."

D'Angelo Russell on persistent trade rumors: 'I genuinely, humbly don't care'

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Yes, Los Angeles Lakers veteran point guard D'Angelo Russell is aware that he's been the subject of rampant trade rumors.

No, he doesn't care.

It's not that Russell doesn't want to be with the Lakers, it's just that he refuses to spend much time worrying about things that are out of his control.

"My approach is just a little different," Russell said after scoring a team-high 28 points in the Lakers' 124-118 win over the Charlotte Hornets on Monday night. "I really just genuinely, humbly don't care because I know I can't control it for one, and two, I just won't allow my mind to go there. Focus on basketball and not comments and what's trending on social media."

He signed a $36 million, two-year contract with Los Angeles in 2023 that includes player option worth $18.6 million next season, per Spotrac. When he signed that deal, he reportedly waived the no-trade clause.

"I can't control that my contract makes sense to be traded," Russell said. "So I mean, I just play. I can't control that. Once again, I don't care at all."

The NBA trade deadline is Thursday afternoon, just a few hours before the Lakers host the defending NBA champion Denver Nuggets in their next game.

The 27-year-old Russell knows a deal is possible, if not inevitable.

His approach over the next 48 hours is simple: "Show up and work," he said.

"Obviously, I've been here before, I played for the Lakers before so I know what the requirements are to be successful here are," said Russell, who was dealt by the Lakers to the Brooklyn Nets following his second season in the league in 2017. "If you are success here, you will be a part of the future, if not you will get traded."

Russell's numbers this year are nearly identical to last season, averaging 17.4 points and 6.2 assists while shooting 41.6% from 3-point range after a slow start.

But since reentering the starting lineup on Jan. 13, Russell was averaging 23.7 points and 6.6 assists and is shooting 47.1% on 3s before the Charlotte game.

He has averaged 17.7 points and shot 36.6% from 3-point distance for his career.

McCaffrey's play validates the 49ers big deal to acquire him

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP)—As San Francisco 49ers CEO Jed York tells the story, coach Kyle Shanahan took some convincing before deciding it was worth dealing a boatload of draft picks before last season's trade deadline for Christian McCaffrey.

With most teams around the NFL downgrading the value of running backs, the Niners ultimately decided the cost of four draft picks was worth it to acquire McCaffrey from Carolina if they wanted to have a team worthy of winning a championship.

That move was a big step in lifting the 49ers from a good offense to perhaps the most efficient in the NFL and is a major reason why San Francisco is preparing to play the Kansas City Chiefs in the Super Bowl on Sunday.

"That's the time that you want to push your chips in the middle," York said. "I feel like that's where we were with Christian. We did give up a lot. But I think we have one of the best, if not the best player in the National Football League on our team."

McCaffrey has proven to be as valuable as anyone on the 49ers after leading the NFL in yards from scrimmage (2,023), tying for the lead in touchdowns (21) and generating the most first downs (114) in the regular season.

That earned McCaffrey a unanimous spot as the All-Pro running back and made him a finalist for both the MVP and Offensive Player of the Year awards that will he handed out this week.

He's added four more touchdowns and 260 yards from scrimmage in two playoff wins.

"He's why our pass game and our play-action pass and all that kind of stuff opened up because he sort of sets the standard with the run game and then when we do pass the ball, he's there in our play," quarterback Brock Purdy said.

"He catches the ball, he makes guys miss, he can go up against safeties and linebackers and make them miss and stuff in the pass game. And then he scores touchdowns. His stats are crazy. So, he's definitely a valued player and I think the most valued player."

There are few backs as versatile as McCaffrey. He can run inside or outside. He excels at picking up blitzes as well as running pass patterns out of the backfield. Or he can line up in the slot or out wide and run pass patterns as well as many receivers.

That versatility can sometimes be a curse with some coaches viewing him more as a scat back than a traditional three-down back who can pound it between the tackles for positive yards play after play such as the old-school backs from the 1970s and '80s.

That's why McCaffrey made sure Shanahan knew as soon as he arrived that he could handle the heavy load of a three-down back who was physical enough to gain the tough yards when needed.

"It's probably part of my insecurities and competitiveness. I want to be a complete back," he said. "I think this dates back to when I was in middle school and high school. ... I had coaches in the NFL who didn't think I could run in between the tackles. So I think, for me, it'll always be in the back of my head and something that I take a lot of pride in, just being a complete back."

McCaffrey is meticulous about how he takes care of his body starting in the off-season and how hard he works during the season.

That helped McCaffrey play the fourth-most snaps of any running back in the league this season as he rarely takes a play off and gives so much effort even when his number isn't called that Shanahan called him the best player he has ever seen without the ball.

"The guy is insane in how hard he prepares, not just in the season, but I saw him like a week after the season last year and he had a drink with me and he actually had a second one," Shanahan said. "He is like, 'well, only got like four more days left, so I'm going to have a couple for the next four days.' I'm like, 'dude we just finished like five days ago.' He gives himself like 12 days off and he is right back to preparing."

McCaffrey made his debut for the 49ers last season against the Chiefs two days after arriving. He barely knew his teammates' names and didn't know the playbook at all, so other offensive players just pointed him in the right direction after the play was called in the huddle.

McCaffrey managed to rush for 38 yards on four carries and catch two passes for 24 yards in that game but took off the following week when he had a TD run, catch and pass in a win against the Rams. He has scored 38 TDs in his 31 starts in the regular season and playoffs.

"Thank god we got them then and not after they had him for two or three weeks," Chiefs defensive coordinator Steve Spagnuolo said. "It's scary to watch all the weapons they have. He's one piece of it. A big piece of it."

AP

San Francisco 49ers' running back Christian McCaffrey (23) reacts after scoring a touchdown against the Detroit Lions in the second quarter of the NFC Championship NFL football game in Santa Clara, Calif., Sunday, Jan. 28, 2024.

Mahomes tight-lipped about dad's arrest ahead of the Super Bowl

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Kansas City Chiefs quarterback Patrick Mahomes said Monday night his father was "doing good" after his arrest for driving while intoxicated, but otherwise was tight-lipped about the situation.

"It's a family matter, so I'll keep it to the family," Mahomes said at Super Bowl opening night. "That's all I have to say."

Mahomes will try to lead the Chiefs to their second straight title and third in five seasons when they play the San Francisco 49ers on Sunday. This Kansas City's fourth Super Bowl appearance over that span; the Chiefs lost to Tom Brady and the Tampa Bay Buccaneers following the 2020 season.

His dad, former major league pitcher Patrick Mahomes Sr., was arrested Saturday night in Tyler, Texas. But the younger Mahomes appeared in good spirits, taking questions from and then hugging Guillermo Rodriguez from the late-night show "Jimmy Kimmel Live."

Mahomes definitely had a been-there, done-that vibe when speaking with the media.

"You always have nerves going into the Super Bowl," Mahomes said. "You have to embrace those nerves. Now it's about going out and playing the game."

Another Super Bowl victory would further secure Mahomes' place in history. The Chiefs would be the first back-to-back champions since the New England Patriots following the 2003 and 2004 seasons.

It also would be Mahomes' third Super Bowl title, tying him with Troy Aikman for fourth all-time among quarterbacks and just one behind Terry Bradshaw and Joe Montana with four each.

Brady's seven Super Bowl wins is a big number, even for the 28-year-old Mahomes, who, barring injury, is still in the early part of his career.

"I'm not even close to halfway, so I haven't put a lot of thought into it," Mahomes said. "Your goal is to be the best player you can be, and I know I'm blessed to have a lot of great players around me. So right now, I'm going to do whatever I can to beat a great 49ers team and get that third ring. If you ask me that question in 15 years, I'll see if I can get close to seven, but seven seems like a long ways away still."

The Chiefs are in a rare underdog role, with the 49ers favored by 2 1/2 points, according to FanDuel Sportsbook. They also were underdogs in their previous two playoff games, winning at Buffalo and Baltimore.

"We've been dealing with adversity," Mahomes said. "It's great seeing how the guys responded. That's the reason why we're here."

Now there's more adversity, at least for Mahomes and his family.

The older Mahomes, 54, was released on Sunday following his arrest, according jail records from Smith County, Texas. His bond was set at $10,000. He was arrested on the same charge in 2019 and was sentenced to 40 days in jail, Smith County records show.

Mahomes Sr. played 11 seasons (1992-2003) in Major League Baseball. The right-hander was 42-39 with a 5.47 ERA in 308 games (63 starts) for the Twins, Red Sox, Mets, Rangers, Cubs and Pirates.

It's not the first time a family member has created potential distractions for Mahomes.

Last month, prosecutors in Johnson County, Kansas, dismissed three counts of felony aggravated sexual battery against his younger brother, Jackson Mahomes, who was accused of grabbing a woman by the neck and kissing her against her will.

Jackson Mahomes still faces a charge of misdemeanor battery. He has pleaded not guilty.

Jackson's accuser, Aspen Vaughn, claimed to have received death threats and harassment after the case became public, and her restaurant was vandalized before she ultimately decided to close it because of the negative publicity associated with the case.

Jackson also stirred up controversy a couple of years ago for tossing water on Ravens fans who were taunting him after a Chiefs loss, and for dancing in a TikTok video on the number painted on the field of slain Washington safety Sean Taylor.

Mahomes' wife, Brittany, was criticized in January 2022 for spraying sparkling wine on cold fans after a Chiefs playoff win.

49ers will remain at original Super Bowl practice field despite initial concerns

The San Francisco 49ers will practice for the Super Bowl at UNLV's campus as scheduled despite having initial worries about the condition of the field. The Niners had expressed concern to the league that the field on UNLV's campus is too soft even though NFL inspectors cleared it for safety. Sod was recently placed over the turf field on UNLV's campus for the 49ers to use this week.

Coach Kyle Shanahan told reporters at media night Monday in Las Vegas that the field had been improving every day since the team initially looked at it last week. The 49ers held a walkthrough on the field Monday and will practice there starting Wednesday as scheduled.

"We're not worried about it at all," Shanahan said. "It is what it is. We're here and we won't change anything."

NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said earlier in the day that league and independent inspectors found the practice field safe to use during Super Bowl week.

"We've had 23 experts out there. We had the union out there. All of them think it's a very playable surface," Goodell said at his Super Bowl news conference on Monday. "It's softer than what they practiced on, but that happens. It's well within all of our testing standards. It's something we think all of our experts, as well as neutral field inspectors, have all said unanimously that it's a playable field."

The Kansas City Chiefs, as the designated home team for the game, get to practice at the Las Vegas Raiders facility in nearby Henderson. ***(AP)***

Meeting this Saturday discussing youth baseball

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Natibu Sports Association is hosting a meeting for coaches and stakeholders this Saturday, Feb. 10, 10am, at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium pavilion to discuss youth baseball.

Those interested in coaching or managing a youth baseball team, and those wanting to make an impact in the youth baseball program are welcome to share their ideas and suggestions at the meeting.

LEIGH GASES

The Natibu Sports Association is holding a coaches/stakeholders meeting this Saturday, Feb. 10, 10am, at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium pavilion to discuss youth baseball and a potential to start a season.

George Camacho, a member of NSA, said that since there's currently no Little League baseball program, if there is enough interest and teams for a youth baseball league, it could potentially kickstart a season.

The NSA is a nonprofit organization who coordinate athletic activities such as baseball, T-Ball, basketball, volleyball, and other community projects such as beach clean ups.

According to the NSA, it has adopted the motto of "Cover Home, Anti-Crime Attitude!"

In baseball, cover home means that players have to make sure that they protect home plate from any runs coming in. NSA has taken that concept and applied it to its programs. "We want to "Cover Home" or defend our community against alcohol, drugs, violence, and crime from coming into our homes. In many of these events we also invite and involve parents as well as other community members as they are essential stakeholders in our efforts," said NSA.

The NSA was officially formed as a nonprofit organization in 2009. Natibu means native in the Chamorro language, with the group's name stemming from the CNMI's native people giving back to the community.

For more information, contact Camacho at (670)-287-1134.

Atkins Kroll offers 2024 Lexus RX350 for NMC Golf Open

Atkins Kroll Saipan has recently announced that it will be offering a brand new 2024 Lexus RX350 as a hole-in-one prize for Northern Marianas College Foundation's upcoming NMC Golf Open in March as part of supporting higher education in the CNMI.

"Just like a perfect drive deserves a smooth ride, every student deserves a chance to chase their dreams. We're proud to partner with NMC's Golf Open by throwing a 2024 Lexus RX350 into the mix as the ultimate hole-in-one reward. It's a swing for education, scholarships, and a brighter CNMI," said Atkins Kroll Saipan Sales manager Kevin N. Barnes.

"We are confident that this exciting prize will contribute to a successful NMC Golf Open, and further contribute to the overall success of the NMC Golf Open and the important work of the NMC Foundation. We can't wait to see who will be the lucky winner of the brand-new Lexus," he added.

NMC

Atkins Kroll Saipan has announced that it is offering a brand new 2024 Lexus RX350 as a hole-in-one prize for the upcoming 19th Annual NMC Foundation Golf Tournament. In the photo is NMC president Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero and AK Saipan vice president and general manager Clark Boswell with AK Toyota sales representatives and NMC employees.

NMC's tournament will be a two-day event on March 23 and 24, 2024 at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort, and the tournament fee for the 2024 golf open is $250.

"On behalf of NMC's Foundation, we're truly grateful to Atkins Kroll for their commitment to higher education in the CNMI. Words can't express our appreciation for this magnificent contribution to the NMC Golf Open," said Ben Babauta, chairperson of the NMC Foundation.

The tournament, which is also the signature event of the NMC Foundation, aims to raise funds to build and equip modern, innovative campus facilities that will help expand the CNMI's workforce development efforts, stimulate economic growth, and provide access to quality education for the residents of the CNMI.

Interested companies and individuals who would like to help the college with its rebuilding efforts can donate educational tax credit, cash, or in-kind contributions by visiting www.marianas.edu/golf or by contacting Helen Camacho at helen.camacho@marianas.edu, Raynard Travilla at raynard.travilla@marianas.edu, or Miguel Dandan at miguel.dandan@marianas.edu.

Golfers who would like to register for the upcoming tournament can also visit www.marianas.edu/golf. Only online payments are accepted for this upcoming golf open.

For more updates, follow Northern Marianas College on Facebook and Instagram (nmc.proa) or visit www.marianas.edu. ***(PR)***

RECORD

From page 20

Public School System leadership and the PSS Athletic Department, is so proud to have a record field for the high school division of the 2023-2024 PSS-TakeCare Interscholastic Badminton League. What a way to start the 2024 badminton season," NMBA president Merlie Tolentino said.

"These numbers just proved the growing interest in the sport of badminton among our young population, particularly among our student-athletes. Three years ago, during our inaugural season we only had six teams and most of the players had little to no knowledge of how the game is played. Now, not only did our numbers grow, the level of play has also significantly improved," Tolentino added.

In the inaugural season, SIS won the division championship, beating Agape, while MHS reigned supreme in the second season, as it also prevailed over Agape in the finale. The third season is an open race with MHS, SIS, and Southern beefing up their rosters with players in the NMI Junior National Team Pool, and Agape bringing up the core of its squads that had back-to-back finals appearances.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan International School's Casey Chambers, right, receives a shot from Kagman High School 2 during their game in the 2023-2024 PSS-TakeCare Interscholastic Badminton League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Meanwhile, PSS Athletic Department director Nick Gross addressed the participating teams during the brief opening ceremony last weekend. He is pleased to have both Tinian and Rota students in the competition, as the interscholastic program aims to provide opportunities to all students across the three islands.

Rota's high school students had their debut in the league against Kagman before playing their second match of the day against MHS 3, while Tinian dueled GCA 2 in the afternoon game. Complete results of last Saturday's matches will be reported this week. ***(PR)***

SIS

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regrouped in the second set and fired point after point, and escaped with the win by three points, 21-18. In the deciding third set, the Geckos found the rhythm they had in the first set, and buried the Eagles, 15-9.

In the Knights game against the Lancherus, the Knights' rotation of Jayson Tagabuel, Arstin Tagabuel, Do Geon Kim, Si Woo Lee, Juhwan Hyun, Francisco Maratita, Dylan Niric, Donald Tagabuel, Leonmar Regalado, Joey Mostales, Gonshiro Sasamoto, Daniel Kang, Jeremy Terlaje, Ryan Choi, and Franko Tudela, made light work of the first set and won without much retaliation, 21-7.

The Knights then finished the job in the second set, 21-16, and took their second win of the season.

In other results, Tanapag Middle School swam past Saipan Community School, 21-13, 21-17; Hopwood Middle School beat SIS II, 21-12, 21-17; Francisco M. Sablan Middle School outlasted Dandan Middle School in three sets, 20-22, 21-19, 15-6; and TMS II pummeled COVMS II, 21-18, 21-9.

The Geckos and Knights currently lead the varsity standings with their two wins each, followed by a win each by COVMS, Agape Christian School, HMS, TMS, and FMS.

A

From page 20

At the final buzzer, A Plus blew Latte Built out by 42 points, 112-70. Mendiola had the honor of the most points with 31, while Sanchez scored 20, Joel Javier made 19 points, and Estolas put up 18. For Latte Built, Conti collected 23 points, Albert Pangan had 16, and Saplan scored 12.

The next game is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 10, 6:30pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

A Plus 112 – Mendiola 31, Sanchez 20, Javier 19, Estolas 18, De Guzman 14, Echavez 10.

Latte Built 70 – Conti 23, Pangan 16, Saplan 12, Gragasin 10, Cubangbang 3, Lilies 2, Goco 2, Isip 2.

Scoring by quarters: 39-6,

LEIGH GASES

A Plus' Andrew Ashburn goes up for a layup during their game against Latte Built in the NMIBF Masters Preseason Basketball League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Donovan Mitchell, Cavs keep rolling, beat Kings, 136-110.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Meeting this Saturday discussing youth baseball.

PAGE 19

Record field in HS badminton league

A record 15 teams, including first-time participant and Rota's Dr. Rita H. Inos Junior/Senior High School, are competing in the co-ed high school division of the 2023-2024 PSS-TakeCare Interscholastic Badminton League.

Now on its third season, the Northern Marianas Badminton Association-sanctioned competition kicked off last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium with the 15 teams divided into three pools for the regular season games. All three islands are represented in the high school league with 10 Rota high school students as well as 10 from Tinian Junior/Senior High School joining their counterparts from Saipan—players from Marianas High School, Saipan Southern High School, Kagman High School, Saipan International School, Agape Christian School, and Grace Christian Academy.

Bracket 1 has Tinian, MHS 1, GCA 2, Agape 2, and Saipan Southern 2, while SIS 2, Kagman 2, MHS 2, Saipan Southern 1, and Agape 1 make up Bracket 2. Rounding out the competing teams are MHS 3, SIS 1, GCA 1, Dr. Rita Inos, and Kagman 1 of Bracket 3. Teams in each bracket will play in a round-robin regular season and the top finisher in each pool will advance to the playoffs, which will also have a round-robin format to determine the division champion.

"The NMBA, through the continued support of the CNMI

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A player from Dr. Rita H. Inos Junior/Senior High School serves to Marianas High School 3 during their game in the 2023-2024 PSS-TakeCare Interscholastic Badminton League last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

SIS, MCS win 2 v-ball games in a row

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Saipan International School Geckos and Mount Carmel School Knights are on a roll as they've won their second straight game in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Boys Middle School Volleyball League 2023-2024.

Like their first game, the Geckos fought tooth and nail and won in three tough sets against the Grace Christian Academy Eagles, while the Knights breezed past Chacha Ocean View Middle School Lancherus in two sets last Thursday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

The Geckos' rotation of Theo Joab, Springer, Jude Rayphand, Kanoa Owens, William Guo, Landon Pudney, and Jin Hyun Felix Choi snatched up the first set easily, 21-8. The Eagles then

See SIS on Page 19

LEIGH GASES

In this file photo, Saipan International School's Landon Pudney delivers a kill over the net during their game in the NMIVA-PSS Interscholastic Boys Middle School Volleyball League 2023-2024 at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

A Plus draws 1st blood in Preseason Masters League

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

A Plus drew first blood in the NMIBF Masters Preseason Basketball League after they muscled past Latte Built, 112-70, last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

A Plus was in a league of their own from the get-go, sinking their shots as often as their attempts, while Latte Built was still trying to get their bearings straight. A Plus led, 20-0, a few minutes already into the first quarter.

Latte Built couldn't find any openings in A Plus' strong defense until finally, Joel Saplan broke the ice and put them up on the board. Latte Built still ended the first quarter with a huge 6-39 deficit.

LEIGH GASES

A Plus' Chris Sanchez sets up the play during their game against Latte Built in the NMIBF Masters Preseason Basketball last Saturday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

A Plus' momentum only quickened from there, as Latte Built fell into a deeper hole and lashed out with multiple back-to-back fouls. A Plus' Jun Estolas led the team from the free throw line for a 47-28 second quarter.

At this point, A Plus didn't have to exert themselves any longer as they had a more than comfortable cushion leading into the second half of the game, but Dexter Mendiola and Chris Sanchez continued to make it rain buckets.

Latte Built's Noel Conti tried to move their number on the scoreboard little by little from the 3-point line, but his efforts were wasted as A Plus added more and more points on their end.

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